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ABSTRACT

This report describes a program for improving moral character to increase academic achievement. Targeted population consisted of middle school students in a growing middle class community in a northern suburb of Chicago, Illinois. The problem, an absence of proper moral character, was documented through data collected from discipline referrals to the administration, teacher interviews and surveys that describe student behavior, and assessments that indicated student academic performance. Analysis of probable cause data revealed that students reported a lack of moral character related to home environment, violence in the media, and differing ethnic backgrounds. Faculty reported a lack of moral character relating to staff response to discipline, attendance, acceptance of derogatory remarks, and communication breakdown in school settings. Reviews of solution strategies suggested by reliable sources, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in implementing character education through literature-based learning for seventh and eighth grade students. Post-intervention data indicates some improvement of moral character, which in turn increased student academic achievement. Because of the intervention of a literature-based program, there was a decrease in the disciplinary infractions, an increase in grade point averages, and an improvement in attendance and cafeteria behavior. Recommendations include that the intervention be employed across the curriculum and that character education be a focus throughout the entire school year. Includes 20 figures and 12 tables. Contains 42 references. Appended are student interview forms, observation checklists, character trait mosaic, self cartoon template, I am...poem model, "The Mighty" T-chart on behaviors, and character trait mosaic group assignments. (Author/BT)

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IMPROVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH CHARACTER EDUCATION

Chip Finck
Cynthia Hansen
Jane Jensen

An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the

School of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the

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Field-Based Masters Program

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Abstract

This report describes a program for improving moral character in order to increase academic achievement. The targeted population consisted of middle school students in a growing middle school community in a northern suburb of Chicago, Illinois. The problem which consisted of an absence of proper moral character was documented through data collected from the following: discipline referrals to the administration, teacher interviews and surveys that describe student behavior, and assessments that indicate student academic performance.

An analysis of problem cause data revealed that students reported a lack of moral character related to home environment, violence in the media, and differing ethnic backgrounds. Faculty reported a lack of moral character relating to staff response to discipline, attendance, acceptance of derogatory remarks and communication breakdown in school settings.

Reviews of solution strategies suggested by reliable sources combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in implementing character education through literature based learning for seventh and eighth grade.

Post intervention data indicates some improvement of moral character which in turn increased student academic achievement. Because of the intervention of a literature-based program, there was a decrease in the disciplinary infractions, an increase in grade point averages, and an improvement in attendance and cafeteria behavior.

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

The targeted middle school students showed a lack of moral character, which interferes with their academic achievement by classroom disruption and discipline problems. Evidence for the existence of the problem includes discipline referrals to the administration, teacher interviews and surveys that describe student behavior, and assessments that indicate student academic performance.

Immediate Problem Context

The middle school that was studied had the following student demographics. The school's total population was 1,905 students. The ethnic distribution consisted of 74.9% White, 5.1% Black, 10.3% Mexican-American, 9.3% Asian, and 0.5% Native American. The school's low-income households ranked at 7.7%. Families ranked as being low-income were defined as receiving public aid, may live in institutions for neglected or delinquent children, maybe supported in foster homes, or maybe eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches. The attendance pattern for the school has three categories. The ratings of these categories include the following: attendance, which is defined as

the number of peoples present for a full school day, of 95.5%, mobility, which is defined as the number for students entering and leaving the school district, of 18.6%, and chronic truancy of 0.4%. Chronic truancy was defined as students who were absent from school without valid cause for 18 or more of the last 180 school days. (School Report Card, 2000)

The district, which encompassed the middle school that was studied, had the following teacher demographics. The district's total teaching population was 384 teachers. The ethnic distribution consisted of 96.1% White, 0.3% Black, 2.6% Mexican-American, 1.0% Asian, and 0% Native American. 12.8% of the teachers were male and 87.2% female. The average years of teaching experience was 8.9 years. The educational levels that had been obtained were as follows: 61.6% teachers held a Bachelor's degree and 38.4% teachers held a Master's degree and higher. (School Report Card, 2000) The total number of staff by subject was broken down as follows: 20 language arts teachers, 20 math teachers, 20 social studies teachers, 20 science teachers, 9 physical education teachers, 3 health teachers, 3 technology teachers, 5 music teachers, 3 art teachers, 2 life skills teachers, 2 applied practical arts teachers, 5 Spanish teachers, 3 English as a second language/bilingual teachers, 23 special education teachers, 5 gifted and challenge teachers, 3 speech and language pathologists, 7 psychologists and social workers, 1 hearing itinerant teacher, 1 computer teacher, 1 librarian, and 1 nurse. (McCullumn, personal communication, August 13, 2001)

The school's program demonstrated the following characteristics: Each student was a member of a team of 100 students and four content teachers including language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science. Students rotated among team teachers for advisory, which was a time of self-reflection, enhancing social skills, and building school pride. They also rotated for content subjects. (School District Brochure, 2000) The mission statement of the school district was "Our goal is to challenge each student everyday to become a life-long learner." (Student Handbook, 2000) At the time of the study, the school was implementing a program promoting respect. The program encouraged students to respect themselves, their teachers and peers, their school, and the school community. The program also gave recognition and incentives to teams that excelled in modeling respect.

The Surrounding Community

The K-8 Elementary school district contained a total student population of 6,925. The district had two primary schools, grades early childhood through first grade housing 1,725 students; one elementary school, grades second and third, housing 1,425 students; one intermediate school, grades fourth and fifth, housing 1,525 students; two middle schools, grades sixth through eighth, housing 2,250 students. The total staff population for the district was approximately 1,000 employees which included nearly 500 certified staff employees. (School District Brochure, 2000) The total number of administrative personnel for the district was one superintendent, two assistant superintendents, six principals and 10 assistant principals. (School District Website, 2001)

The consolidated district included parts of three communities: Community A, Community B, and Community C. The demographics for Community A were as follows: total population was 7,388 residents. The ethnic distribution consisted of 91.0% White, 1.6% Black, 0.2% Mexican-American, 4.2% Asian, and 0.4% Native American. The median income for the Community A was $43,712. The labor force consisting of persons 16 years and over was 5,676. The gender distribution consisted of 49% males and 51% females. The average age was 32.2 years old. (United States Census Bureau, 1990, 2000)

Community B consisted of a total population of 28,834 residents. The ethnic distribution consisted of 82.1% White, 5.1% Black, 6.0% Mexican-American, 8.2% Asian, and 0.6% Native American. The median income for the community was $49,069. The labor force consisting of persons 16 years and over was 10,588. The gender distribution consisted of 48.5% males and 51.5% females. The average age was 34.2 years old. (United States Census Bureau, 1990,2000)

Community C consisted of a total population of 6,637 residents. The ethnic distribution consisted of 60.4% White, 7.5% Black, 37.8% Mexican-American, 8.8% Asian, and 0.2% Native American. The median income for the community was $29,063. The labor force consisting of persons 16 years and over was 3,571. The gender distribution consisted of 50.8% males and 49.2% females. The average age was 29.7 years old. (United States Census Bureau, 1990, 2000)

Community A was homogeneous, while community B and community C were more diverse. As supported by the statistics, community A consisted of 91.0% white,

whereas community B consisted of 82.1% white, and community C consisted of 60.4% white. (United States Census Bureau, 1990, 2000)

The school district received considerable support from its communities. Three successful referendums were passed for construction and growth in November, 1990 ($14 million), November, 1995 ($36 million), and November, 2000 ($48 million). In addition to the monies from referendums, the school district received a grant from the state ($15.2 million) for construction. (Schaeffer, personal communication, August 14, 2001)

There had been a dramatic population growth that occurred between 1984 and 2000 due to extensive residential and commercial building that occurred in the district. The student enrollment increased significantly between the two time periods. Between the years of 1984 and 1996, there was a 62.4% increase in population. Between the years of 1996 and 2000, there was a 34.1% increase. (Village Website, 2001)

National Context of the Problem

The problem of a lack of moral character in students has generated concern at the national level (United States Department of Education, 1998, 2000). The national character education movement has been defined as the most rapidly growing school reform in the nation today (Lickona, 1999). President Bush had recognized a national need for character education by increasing spending from $9 million to $25 million for character education. Character education was suggested or legislated in 80% of states, according to the Character Education Partnership in Washington, D.C. (McCarron, 2001). The Character Education Partnership followed eleven principles as their criteria

for schools to follow in order to plan a character education program. The eleven principles included the following:

1. Character education promotes core ethical values as the basis of good character.

2. "Character" must be comprehensively defined to include thinking, feeling, and behavior.

3. Effective character education requires an intentional, proactive, and comprehensive approach that promotes the core values in all phases of school life.

4. The school must be a caring community.

5. To develop character, students need opportunities for moral action.

6. Effective character education includes a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners and helps them succeed.

7. Character education should strive to develop students' intrinsic motivation.

8. The school staff must become a learning and moral community in which all share responsibility for character education and attempt to adhere to the same core values that guide the education of students.

9. Character education requires moral leadership from both staff and students.

10. The school must recruit parents and community members as full partners in the character-building effort.

11. Evaluation of character education should assess the character of the school, the school staff's functioning as character educators, and the extent to which students manifest good character. (Lickona, 2001,p. 1).

Individual states of the nation have also documented the need to improve moral character in students. In 1998, Vice President Al Gore declared that ten states had received $2.7 million in grants to improve character education in their learning experiences at the local school districts and communities. The states receiving monies from this grant were Wisconsin, Hawaii, New York, Oregon, Colorado, Indiana, Minnesota, Iowa, Alaska, and Ohio. In 2000, United States Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley announced that an additional nine states had received $2.5 million in grants to improve character education in their learning experiences at the local school districts and communities. The states receiving monies from this grant were District of Colombia, Idaho, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Virginia. According to Riley, "Good citizenship, compassion and respect for others are qualities just as important as learning to high standards in math, science and reading and school is where most young people spend most of their time outside the home. With these grants, schools and communities can reinforce parents in helping students learn to make good choices and be positive members of society throughout their lives" (United States Department of Education, 1998, 2000, p.1).

In addition to grants, states have been honored for their implementation of character education in individual schools. Through the Blue Ribbon Schools program, model schools were recognized for exhibiting best practices in character education.

The criteria that each school's character education program had to meet in order to receive recognition included a strong philosophy of ethical values such as honesty, respect, caring, and fairness; family and community partnerships to promote the core values; school staff modeling and promoting the core values; and evaluating the program and assessing the students understanding and action upon core values. (United States Department of Education, 2001). Through the National Schools of Character awards program, model schools were honored for demonstrating exceptional character education initiatives and achieving positive results in student behavior, school climate and academic performance. Winners receiving the award emphasized moral values such as respect (admiration or self-esteem), responsibility (accountability or dependability), civility (courtesy or politeness), and civic mindedness (concern with community well-being). The students' goal was to demonstrate these traits through actions and learning activities (Character Education Partnership, 2000).

The need for such programs is apparent. When 15,000 teens were surveyed regarding their attitudes about violence, there were disturbing results. The results were as follows according to Josephson Institute of Ethics:

- More than one in three students (39% of middle schoolers and 36% of high schoolers) say they don't feel safe at school and they may have good reason.
- 43% of high school and 37% of middle school boys believe it is OK to hit or threaten a person who makes them angry. Nearly one in five (19%) of the girls agree.

- An even higher percentage actually resorts to violence: 75% of all boys and over 60% of girls surveyed said they hit someone in the past 12 months because they were angry.
- More than one in five (21%) high school boys and 15% of middle school males took a weapon to school at least once in the past year.
- 60% of high school and 31% middle school boys said they could get a gun if they wanted to.
- 69% of high school and 27% of middle school boys said they could get drugs if they wanted to.
- 19% of high school and 9% of middle school boys admit they were drunk at school at least once in the past year. (Josephson Institute of Ethics, 2001, p.1)

The vast interest in character education has shown positive results. For example, in 1981, the California-based Developmental Studies Center, CDP had conducted extensive educational research in school-reform that focused on character development. It concluded that academics needed to be tied to values and the school and home curriculum needed to be united. Eric Schaps, president of CDP stated, "Our research shows that, regardless of the ethnic or economic composition of the school, the more children feel that their school community cares about them and meets their needs, the more likely they are... to thrive academically and socially." (as cited in Wiley, 2000, p.2).

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

In order to document the extent of the lack of moral character in middle school students, a behavior checklist consisting of demerits, detentions, office referrals, grade point average, and attendance; a student questionnaire on character; student interview on character; and an observation checklist consisting of cafeteria behavior were gathered. All of the 115 students on the seventh grade team, language arts class A and all of the 90 students on the eighth grade team, language arts class B, were involved in this process over the six-week time period.

A behavior checklist was developed by the researchers (see Appendix A) to aid in the recording process. The data was gathered on January 8, 2002 for the weeks of December 3-21, 2001. A summary of the number of demerits, detentions, and office referrals, as well as the grade point averages and attendance is presented in Figures 1-6.

A demerit is an infraction that is addressed at the classroom level. Infractions that would warrant a demerit include violation of dress code, unprepared for class,

breaking classroom rules, profanity, loitering, lying, non-compliance, throwing items with no contact. A detention is issued after each of the 7th, 8th, and 9th demerit. A student would receive a detention for continuous problems such as violation of dress code, unprepared for class, breaking classroom rules, profanity, loitering, lying, non-compliance, throwing items with no contact. An office referral is given based on the severity of the infraction or repetition of the offense. Infractions that would warrant an office referral include cheating, dangerous behavior, fighting, harassment, major insubordination/disrespect, possession of drugs or material, theft, threatening/intimidating behavior, and vandalism. (Student Handbook, 2001)

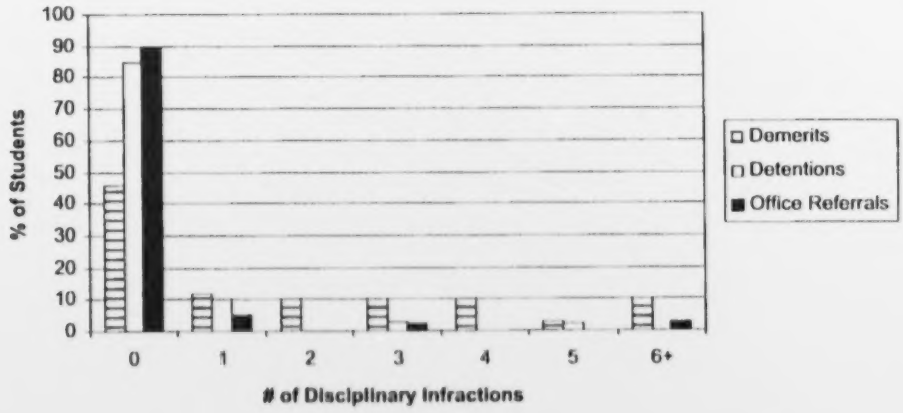

Figure 1. Categories and Frequencies of Disciplinary Infractions for Language Arts Class A Pre-Implementation

Figure 1 shows the frequency of disciplinary infractions for Language Arts Class A. Of the 115 students in Language Arts Class A during 2nd quarter midterm (December 3-21, 2001), 46% received zero demerits, 85% received zero detentions, and 90% received zero office referrals. Twelve percent of the students received one demerit,

10% received one detention, and five percent received one office referral. Ten percent of the students received two demerits, none received two detentions, and none received two office referrals. Ten percent of the students received three demerits, three percent received three detentions, and two percent received three office referrals. Ten percent of the students received four demerits. Three percent of the students received five demerits and two percent received five detentions. Ten percent of the students received six or more demerits and three percent received six or more office referrals. Overall, the majority of the infractions for Language Arts Class B received zero demerits, detentions, and office referrals.

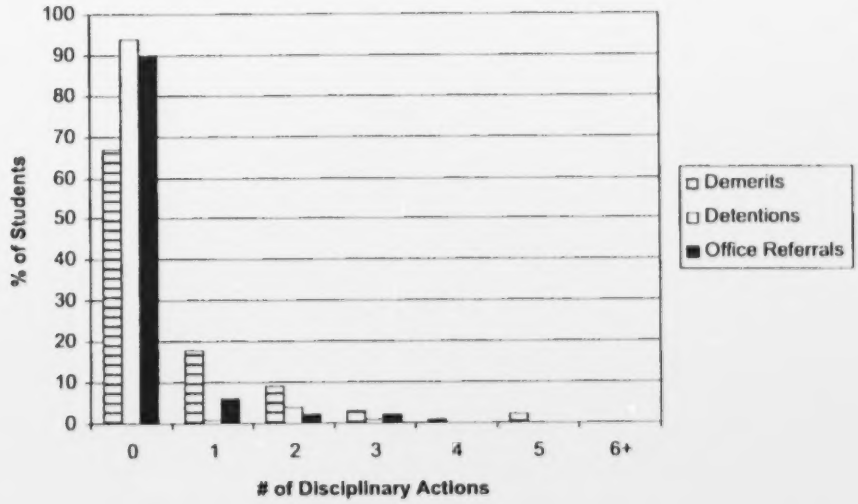

Figure 2. Categories and Frequencies of Disciplinary Infractions for Language Arts Class B Pre-Implementation

Figure 2 shows the frequency of disciplinary infractions for Language Arts Class B. Of the 90 students in Language Arts Class B during 2nd quarter midterm (December

3-21, 2001), 67% received zero demerits, 94% received zero detentions, and 90% received zero office referrals. Eighteen percent of the students received one demerit, one percent received one detention, and six percent received one office referral. Nine percent of the students received two demerits, four percent received two detentions, and two percent received two office referrals. Three percent of the students received three demerits, one percent received three detentions, and two percent received three office referrals. One percent of the students received four demerits. Two percent of the students received five demerits. Overall, the majority of the infractions for Language Arts Class B received zero demerits, detentions, and office referrals.

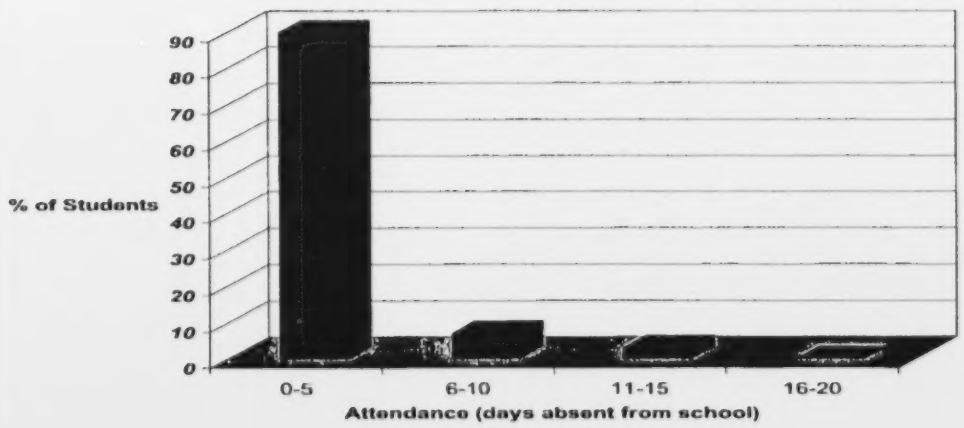

Figure 3. Attendance for Language Arts Class A Pre-Implementation

Figure 3 shows the number of days students were absent from school for Language Arts Class A. Of the 115 students in Language Arts Class A during 2nd quarter midterm (December 3-21, 2001), 90 percent of the students were absent five

days or less. Seven percent of the students were absent for six to ten days. Three percent of the students were absent for eleven to fifteen days.

In summary, the majority of the students were absent for five days or less. No student was absent for sixteen to twenty days. Ten percent of the students were absent for six to fifteen days.

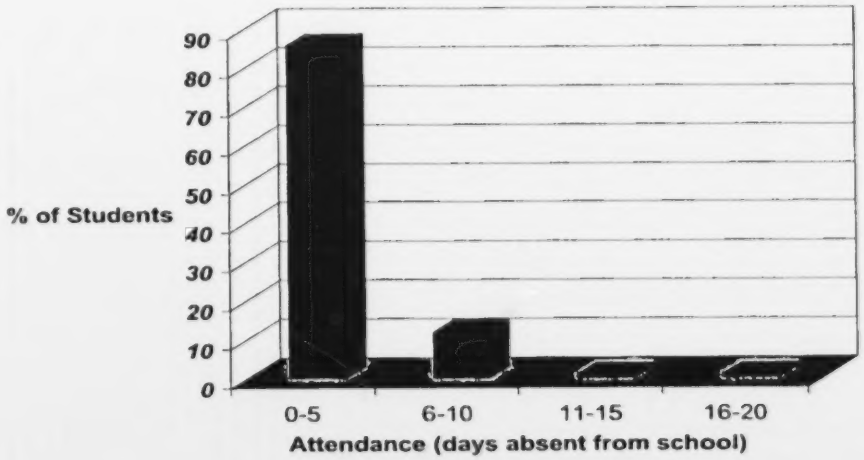

Figure 4. Attendance for Language Arts Class B Pre-Implementation

Figure 4 shows the number of days students were absent from school for Language Arts Class B. Of the 90 students in Language Arts Class B during 2nd quarter midterm (December 3-21, 2001), 86 percent of the students were absent five days or less. Twelve percent of the students were absent for six to ten days. One percent of the students were absent for eleven to fifteen days. One percent of the students were absent for sixteen to twenty days. Overall, the majority of the students were absent for five days or less.

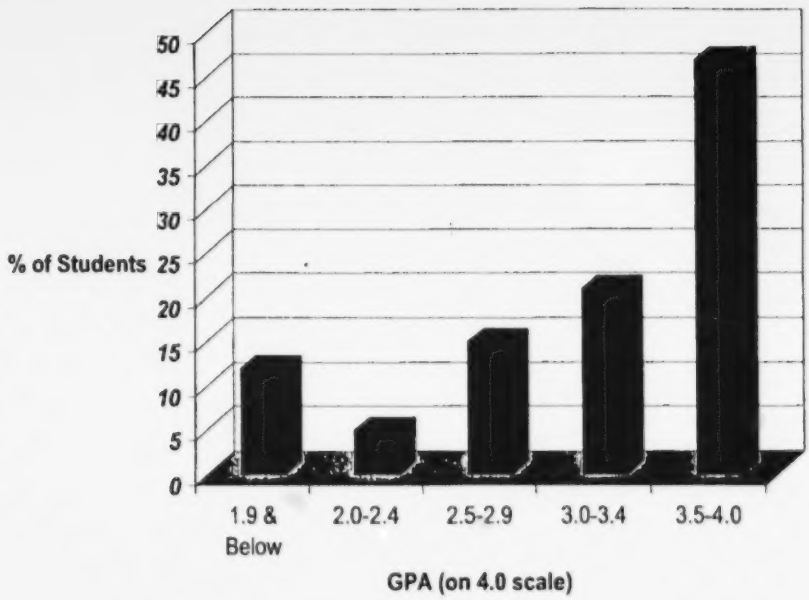

Figure 5. GPA for Language Arts Class A Pre-Implementation

Figure 5 shows the results of students' GPA for Language Arts Class A. Of the 115 students in Language Arts Class A during 2nd quarter midterm (December 3-21, 2001), twelve percent of the students earned a 1.9 grade point average or below. Five percent of the students earned a 2.0 to 2.4 grade point average. Fifteen percent of the students earned a 2.5 to 2.9 grade point average. Twenty-one percent of the students earned a 3.0 to 3.4 grade point average. Forty-seven percent earned a 3.5 to 4.0 grade point average.

In summary, approximately two-thirds of the students earned a 3.0 to 4.0 (B average or better) grade point average. One-third of the students earned a 2.9 grade point average or below.

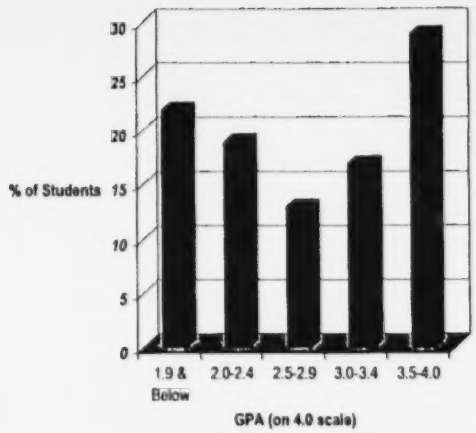

Figure 6. GPA for Language Arts Class B Pre-Implementation

Figure 6 shows the results of students' GPA for Language Arts Class B. Of the 90 students in Language Arts Class B during 2nd quarter midterm (December 3-21, 2001), twenty-two percent of the students earned a 1.9 grade point average or below. Nineteen percent of the students earned a 2.0 to 2.4 grade point average. Thirteen percent of the students earned a 2.5 to 2.9 grade point average. Seventeen percent of the students earned a 3.0 to 3.4 grade point average. Twenty-nine percent earned a 3.5 to 4.0 grade point average.

In conclusion, the majority of the students earned a 2.0 to 3.4 grade point average. Almost an equal amount of students earned a 3.5 to 4.0 grade point average or a 1.9 or below average.

A student questionnaire on character beliefs was given on January 15, 2002. The questionnaire was adapted from a survey conducted by Josephson Institute on

Ethics by the researchers (see Appendix A). A summary of the student questionnaire results is presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Categories and response of student questionnaire on character for Language Arts Class A Pre-Implementation

Student Questionnaire Categories	% of Students who Agree	% of Students who Disagree
Integrity	78%	22%
Honesty	42%	58%
Honor	89%	11%
Truthfulness	44%	56%
Wealth	83%	17%
Religion	94%	6%
Trustworthiness	80%	20%
Respect	77%	23%

Table 1 shows the results of the student questionnaire on character for Language Arts Class A. Of the 115 students surveyed prior to intervention in Language Arts Class A, 78% of the students agreed and 22% of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of integrity. Forty-two percent of the students agreed and 58% of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of honesty. Eighty-nine percent of the students agreed and 11% of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of honor. Forty-four percent of the students agreed and 56% of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance

of truthfulness. Eighty-three percent of the students agreed and 17% of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of wealth. Ninety-four percent of the students agreed and four percent of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of religion. Eighty percent of the students agreed and 20% of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of trustworthiness. Seventy-seven percent of the students agreed and 23% of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of respect.

In summary, religion, honor and wealth were the top three categories that students agreed with or thought were important qualities to have. Trust-worthiness, integrity and respect were thought to be important qualities by at least 75% of the students. Forty-four percent of the students have admitted to being not truthful or admitted that they would be non-truthful if it helped them get a good job. Forty-two percent of the students have admitted to not being honest or agreed that being dishonest would help them in the future.

Table 2. Categories and response of student questionnaire on character for Language Arts Class B Pre-Implementation

Student Questionnaire Categories	% of Students who Agree	% of Students who Disagree
Integrity	76%	24%
Honesty	33%	67%
Honor	83%	17%
Truthfulness	55%	45%
Wealth	70%	30%
Religion	82%	18%
Trustworthiness	94%	6%
Respect	96%	4%

Table 2 shows the result of the student questionnaire on character for Language Arts Class B. Of the 90 students surveyed prior to intervention in Language Arts Class B, 76% of the students agreed and 24% of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of integrity. Thirty-three percent of the students agreed and 67% of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of honesty. Eighty-three percent of the students agreed and 17% of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of honor. Fifty-five percent of the students agreed and 45% of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of truthfulness. Seventy percent of the students agreed and 30% of the students

disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of wealth. Eighty-two percent of the students agreed and 18% of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of religion. Ninety-four percent of the students agreed and six percent of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of trustworthiness. Ninety-six percent of the students agreed and four percent of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of respect.

In conclusion, respect, trustworthiness, and honor were the top three categories that students agree with or thought were important qualities to have. Religion, integrity, and wealth were thought to be important qualities by at least 70% of the students. Fifty-five percent of the students have admitted to being not truthful or admitted that they would be non-truthful if it helped them get a good job. Thirty-three percent of the students have admitted to not being honest or agreed that being dishonest would help them in the future.

A student interview form was developed by the researchers (see Appendix A). Interviews were conducted by the researchers the week of January 14, 2002 prior to the intervention. A summary of the student interview responses is presented in Tables 3 and 4 and Figures 7 and 8.

Table 3. Student interview responses for Language Arts Class A Pre-Implementation

Interview Responses	% of Responses
Definition of Character	
• How you are inside	75%
• Personality	50%
• Values and Traits	25%
Traits that one has who demonstrates good character	
• Kindness	9%
• Honesty	28%
• Wisdom	9%
• Nice/caring/thoughtfulness	11%
• Respect/integrity	29%
• Responsibility	14%

Table 3 shows the results of the student interviews for Language Arts Class A. Of the 12 students interviewed for Language Arts Class A prior to the intervention, 75% of the students said the definition of character was how you are inside. Fifty percent of the students said the definition of character was personality. Twenty-five percent of the students said the definition of character was your values and traits. Students were asked what are traits that one has who demostrate good character. Nine percent responded kindness, 28% responded honesty, 9% responded wisdom, 11% responded

nice/caring/thoughtfulness, 29% responded respect/integrity, and 14% responded responsibility.

In summary, the majority of the students who were interviewed said that how you are inside is the definition of character. The top two traits that the interviewees felt one has to have to demostrate good character were honesty and respect/integrity. The two traits that were the least important to have to demostrate good character were kindness and wisdom.

Table 4. Student interview responses for Language Arts Class B Pre-Implementation

Interview Responses	% of Responses
Definition of Character	
• Who a person is	75%
• How you describe something	13%
• Intelligence, problems, feelings	12%
Traits that one has who demonstrates good character	
• Kindness	38%
• Honesty	63%
• Friendship	38%
• Nice/caring/thoughtfulness	38%
• Respect/integrity	50%
• Love/forgiveness	50%

Table 4 shows the results of the student interviews for Language Arts Class B. Of the eight students interviewed for Language Arts Class B prior to the intervention, 75% of the students said the definition of character was who a person is. Thirteen percent of the students said the definition of character was how you describe something. Twelve percent of the students said the definition of character was intelligence, problems, feelings. Students were asked what are traits that one has who demostrate good character. Thirty-eight percent responded kindness, 63% responded honesty, 38% responded friendship, 38% responded nice/caring/thoughtfulness, 50% responded respect/integrity, and 50% responded love/forgiveness.

In conclusion, the majority of the students who were interviewed said that the definition of character is who a person is. The top trait that the interviewees felt one has to have to demostrate good character was honesty. The two traits that were the least important to have to demostrate good character were kindness and friendship.

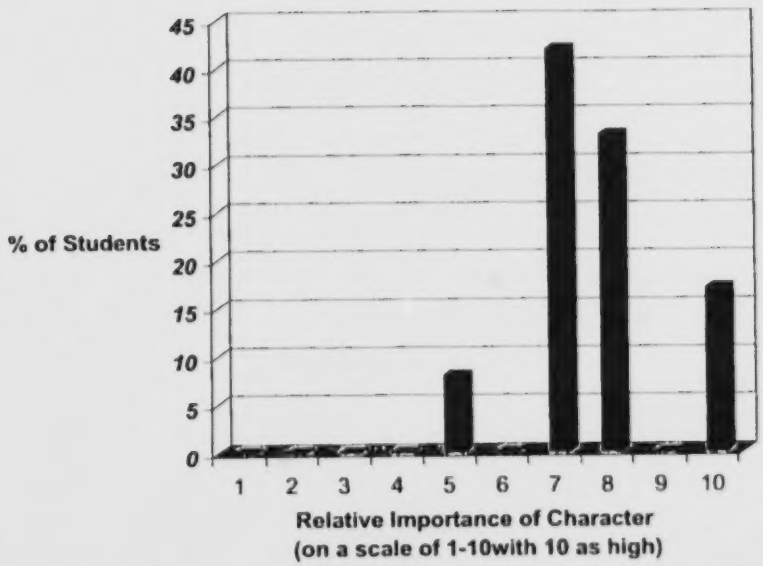

Figure 7. Student interview responses to importance of character (on a scale of 1-10) for Language Arts Class A Pre-Implementation

Figure 7 shows the results of the student interview responses on the importance of character for Language Arts Class A. Of the twelve students interviewed for Language Arts Class A, none of the students ranked the importance of character as an "one", "two", "three", or "four" (on a scale of 1-10). Eight percent ranked the importance of character as a "five". None of the students ranked the importance of character as a "six". Forty-two percent of the students ranked the importance of character as a "seven". Thirty-three percent of the students ranked the importance of character as an "eight". None of the students ranked the importance of character as a "nine". Seventeen percent of the students ranked the importance of character as a "ten".

In summary, ninety-two percent of the students ranked the importance of having character between a "seven" and a "ten" as high. Eight percent of students ranked the importance of having character as a five or below which would be low on the scale.

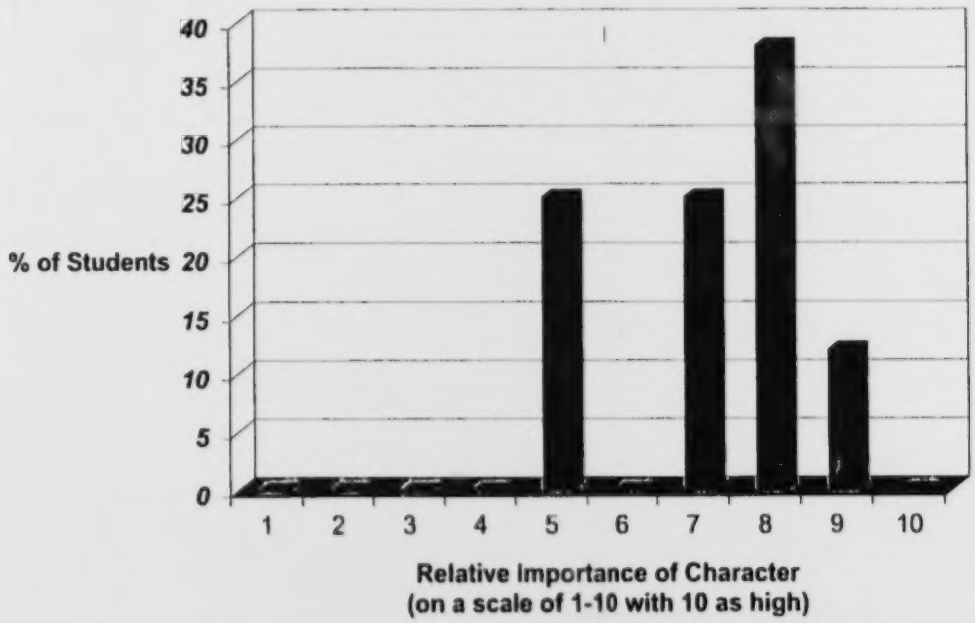

Figure 8. Student interview responses to importance of character (on a scale of 1-10) for Language Arts Class B Pre-Implementation

Figure 8 show the results of the student interview responses on the importance of character for Language Arts Class B. Of the eight students interviewed for Language Arts Class B, none of the students ranked the importance of character as an "one", "two", "three", or "four" (on a scale of 1-10). Twenty-five percent ranked the importance of character as a "five". None of the students ranked the importance of character as a "six". Twenty-five percent of the students ranked the importance of character as a "seven". Thirty-eight percent of the students ranked the importance of character as an

"seven". Thirty-eight percent of the students ranked the importance of character as an "eight". Twelve percent of the students ranked the importance of character as a "nine". None of the students ranked the importance of character as a "ten".

In conclusion, fifty percent of the students ranked the importance of having character between a "five" and "seven". Fifty percent of students ranked the importance of having character between an "eight" and "nine". The rank of "ten" was the highest score on the scale.

A tally record was developed by the researchers to aid in the recording process for the observation checklist on cafeteria behavior. Data was collected January 15, 2002 prior to intervention. A summary of the percent of cafeteria behaviors is presented in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5. Categories and percent of incidents in cafeteria for Language Arts Class A Pre-Implementation

Behavior Category for Cafeteria	% of Incidents
In Line	
• Negative Behavior - respect toward others not shown	18%
• Positive Behavior – reflects manners (please, thank you, excuse me, etc...)	7%
Seated	
• Negative Behavior – respect toward others not shown (didn't keep hands to self)	29%
• Negative Behavior – respect toward others not shown (used derogatory remarks to friends)	14%
• Positive Behavior – social responsibility (took care of own garabage)	68%

Table 5 shows the results of positive and negative cafeteria incidents for Language Arts Class A. Of the 115 students observed in the cafeteria for Language Arts Class A prior to intervention, 18% of the incidents recorded were negative behavior - not showing respecting toward others in line. Seven percent of the incidents recorded were positive behavior - reflecting manners (please, thank you, excuse me, etc...) in line. Of the incidents recorded while the students were seated, 29% reflected negative behavior – not showing respect toward others (did not keep hands to self), 14%

reflected negative behavior – not showing respect toward others (used derogatory remarks to friends), 68% reflected positive behavior – social responsibility (took care of own garbage).

In summary, the majority of the negative incidents (43%) occurred when the students were seated compared to 18% while in line. More students were socially responsible by taking care of their garbage (68%) than those using manners (7%).

Table 6. Categories and percent of incidents in cafeteria for Language Arts Class B Pre-Implementation

Behavior Category for Cafeteria	% of Incidents
In Line	
• Negative Behavior - respect toward others not shown	18%
• Positive Behavior – reflects manners (please, thank you, excuse me, etc…)	0%
Seated	
• Negative Behavior – respect toward others not shown (didn't keep hands to self)	15%
• Negative Behavior – respect toward others not shown (used derogatory remarks to friends)	40%
• Positive Behavior – social responsibility (took care of own garabage)	73%

Table 6 shows the results of positive and negative cafeteria incidents for Language Arts Class B. Of the 90 students observed in the cafeteria for Language Arts Class B prior to intervention, 18% of the incidents recorded were negative behavior - not showing respecting toward others in line. There were no incidents recorded to represent positive behavior - reflecting manners (please, thank you, excuse me, etc...) in line. Of the incidents recorded while the students were seated, 15% reflected negative behavior – not showing respect toward others (didn't keep hands to self), 40% reflect negative behavior – not showing respect toward others (used derogatory remarks to friends), 73% reflected positive behavior – social responsibility (took care of own garbage).

In conclusion, the majority of the negative incidents recorded (55%) occurred when the students were seated compared to 18% while in line. More students were socially responsible by taking care of their garbage (73%) than those using manners (0%).

Probable Causes

Probable causes for a decline in moral character can be found in school and literature. School based problems included an increase in staff turnovers, a diversity of staff population , a diversity of student population, and increased number of unexcused absences, and increase of an acceptance of derogatory remarks in the classroom, and a communication breakdown in the school setting. There are also literature-based causes for a decline in moral character, which included the following: home environment including single parent households, divorce and grandparents

raising children; violence in television and Internet; differing ethnic backgrounds, at-risk behaviors, and poverty were all seen as probable causes for a decline in moral character.

The lack of moral character can be contributed to an increase in staff turnovers and a lack of understanding the rules. The number of new teachers hired in the last three years was 22%. The result of such a high turnover rate leads to a lack of understanding of the rules by faculty.

In addition, the diversity of the staff population also caused confusion in the interpretation of roles. When the staff was interviewed about their role as a disciplinarian the results showed the following: dress code interpretations were different, fear of speaking to students about certain issues due to gender differences were diverse, tolerance varied of sexual harassment differences, and age differences in teachers resulted in a variation of acceptable language and use of titles.

Another probable cause of the decline in moral character was the diversity of the student population, which caused confusion in the interpretation of rules. The following responses occurred when students were interviewed about the enforcement of rules in their school: different teachers resulted in differing rules, students took advantage of inexperienced teachers, and ethnic background caused differing interpretation of rules as well.

Also an increased number of unexcused absences were seen as another factor in the lack of moral character. The number of unexcused absences has increased over the last several years. There were differing opinions as to the priority of school by

parents, which was indicated by the reasons given for student absences. For example, there has been an increase in the number of absences for reasons such as planned vacations during regular school calendar days, students' birthdays, or doctor's appointments during school hours.

Furthermore, it was found that there was an increasing acceptance of derogatory remarks in the classroom. Adding to this problem was the inconsistency among staff members in their tolerance of derogatory remarks and their action taken. A lack of support from parents and administrators also added to the inconsistency.

Another cause was the communication breakdown in the school setting. Some of the factors that caused the breakdown in communication were the increase in the number of staff members. Another inconsistency was the change in administrative structure. From 1999 to 2002, seven new administrators had been hired. It should also be noted that as administration changes so does the number of experienced and inexperienced administrators.

One more influence was the student's home environment. The basic family structure provides the fundamental importance of the family for the child's well being (Biblarz & Gottainer, 2000). Single-parent households are on the rise. Single mothers grew from 6.3% in 1950 to 22.1% in 1998 (Seibert & Willetts, 2000). The U.S. Bureau of the Census, showed in 1980, 20% of children under the age of 18 lived in single-parent families. This rose to 25% by 1990 and 28% by 1997 (Seccombe, 2000). There has been a decrease in homes with married couples. In 1950, 78.3% of children lived in 2-person households versus 53.0% in 1998 (Seibert & Willetts, 2000).

Adolescents who come from single-parent homes are more likely to experience adolescent at-risk behaviors. Cigarette smoking and sexual intercourse were equally prevalent in adolescents who came from single-parent and dual parent households ranging in grades from 7th to 12th. Among younger teenagers (grades 7th-9th), drinking alcohol was another at-risk behavior seen more in single-parent households (Blum et al, 2000). Living in a single-parent household was associated with higher levels of violent involvement (Blum et al, 2000). Studies have shown that children from single-parent households have higher rates of delinquency, emotional problems, and lower school performance. Children raised in single-parent households generally have lower levels of psychological well being and socioeconomic achievement than those raised by two-parent households (Biblarz & Gottainer, 2000).

The increase in both parents working has limited the amount of time the child spends with a parent. In 1997, 63.6% of married women with children under the age of six are in the labor force compared to 18.6% in 1960. With the increase of both parents working, more children are spending more time at home alone. Ten percent of our nation's children are latchkey kids (Seibert & Willetts, 2000).

There are many short and long term negative effects of divorce on children (Shifflett & Cummings, 1999). There has been a dramatic increase in the divorce rate since the 1960s. 40% to as high as 60% of marriages will end in divorce this decade (Seibert & Willetts, 2000). Approximately one million children experience divorce yearly (Morrison, 1999). One in two marriages will end in divorce. (Shifflett & Cummings, 1999). The level of problematic behavior is directly impacted by the parents' divorce.

Children who experience divorce are more likely to exhibit problematic behavior, have lower mental and academic performance, have larger difficulties in social setting, and have a lower self-esteem/concepts of self (Morrison, 1999). The social adjustment of children of divorce is lower than that of children of intact families. Mothers and fathers of intact families have a different impact on children, showing different roles and functions in the marriage and family (Guttmann & Lazar, 1998). Children of divorce exhibited more disruptive classroom behavior, more school attendance issues, and lower IQ scores than children from intact families (Richardson & Rosen, 1999).

A parent's divorce can affect the child's future well being and success. Children can experience confusion, sadness, or anger months or even years after the divorce. Boys are more likely to show behavior problems for about six years after the divorce. Emotional problems vary among adolescent girls dealing with their parents' divorce (Richardson & Rosen, 1999).

There are various long-term effects of divorce on children. A number of young men and women appear to be troubled after the divorce. There is evidence to show that young women of divorced parents are more likely to divorce themselves (Richardson & Rosen, 1999). Children raised in single-parent households resulting in divorce have greater odds of not completing high school, lower chances of entering and graduating from college, a lower average occupational status, and lower average level of happiness in adulthood (Biblarz & Gottainer, 2000).

The fastest growing type of household is that of grandparent and grandchild without the presence of the child's biological parents. In 1997, 780,000 homes in the

U.S. included a grandparent and grandchild with neither of the biological parents. That is approximately 4.0 million children or 5.6% of children in the U.S. It is estimated that between 30-50% of children who are 18 years or younger live in the care of a grandparent in many inner cities. Studies have shown various reasons for why grandparents are raising their grandchildren (Pruchno, 1999). The primary reason given dealt with drug or alcohol addiction on the part of the biological mother (50.9%) or biological fathers (36.9%) (Pruchno, 1999). Physical abuse (35.1% mothers; 16.9% fathers) or emotional neglect (37.6% mothers; 16.1% fathers) were additional reasons for grandparents taking the role of parenting (Pruchno, 1999). Death, being in prison, and unknown whereabouts of the biological parents were also reasons for the role of the parenting change.

In addition, the behavior of the child who is being cared for by a grandparent is directly affected. More than 50% of children had sudden changes in mood; showed high levels of nervousness; were argumentative; had problems concentrating or staying on task; were impulsive, hyperactive, or stubborn; demanded a lot of attention; or were disobedient in the home (Pruchno, 1999). Behavior in the school setting was also affected. Twenty percent of the children were in remedial education classes. During the past school year, 12.3% had been suspended or expelled from school. Twelve percent were performing below average in school (Pruchno, 1999).

Also, negative effects of television and Internet seemed to play a major role in this significant decline in behavior. The amount of violence in television and radio programming is increasing with 25% of primetime television programming showing

violence. Primetime violence tripled during the 1980's. Children programming was recorded as containing over 30 acts of violence per hour (Television and Radio Program Violence Reduction Act of 1993). It is estimated that before the average child finishes grade school, they see 8000 murders and 100,000 violent acts on television.

In addition, studies have shown that violence on television leads to aggressive behavior by children and teens who watch violent programs. Many children watched violent television programs without parent supervision. Not only does television violence increase a child's aggressiveness, it desensitizes them to the effects of violence. (Television and Radio Program Violence Reduction Act of 1993). Teen suicide has increased three fold since 1960. The erosion of character may be undermining the moral fabric of our society and may be responsible in part for the acts of violence that we have witnessed in our country (Kane et al, 1994).

Not only is television a negative influence, the Internet also has seemed to have a direct correlation to poor student behavior. Internet use is often viewed by the young adult without restraints. Eighty percent of parents reported that they were somewhat familiar of their children's Internet usage. It has been recorded that 99% of youths between ages of 12 and 17 use the Internet, 79% can access the internet from home, and 48% go online everyday (Robertson, 2001).

Although 65% of parents think the Internet is used primarily for homework, studies showed that 57% for sending email, 56% for "surfing for fun", and 50% for play games online. Only 38% claim to turn to the Internet for homework use. Although 41% of youths use instant messaging, fewer than 4% of parents are aware of it. By the age

of 13, 81% of youths have an email account, although 44% admit that their parents don't know about at least one of their accounts. 22% of youths have a web page of their own and 45% of them have not shown their sites to their parents or teachers. By high school, 67% of teen's frequent chat rooms and 72% of these chatters are in unmonitored rooms. One third of them visit chartrooms visited by adults (Robertson, 2001).

There also needs to be further study on ethnic background in order to address effectively the social development of children. (Feng & Cartledge, 1996). There are numerous studies on adolescent risk behaviors that show significant differences among ethnic groups and backgrounds (Blum et al, 2000).

The first at-risk behavior study was cigarette and alcohol use. Whites showed higher rates of substance abuse. White youths were between 1.5 and 2.5 times more likely to have smoked in the last month then black and Hispanics. White students were 50% more likely to drink alcohol then black students. There is a rising prevalence in cigarette use among teens. Black youths show a particular rise. Hispanic youths are at risk of alcohol abuse. Children from single parent families show a higher use of cigarette use (Blum et al., 2000).

Suicidal thoughts are also an at risk behavior. There is a rise in suicidal thoughts in both Black and Hispanic children. White males also showed significant inclinations toward these thoughts (Blum et al., 2000).

Engaging in sexual intercourse was another behavior studied for at risk youths. The median age for Black teens to engage in sexual intercourse was 11years old. If

one was male and Black, one was more likely to initiate sexual intercourse. Youths from low-income families, single parent families, or Black families were more likely to be sexually active (Blum et al., 2000).

Weapon related violence was the final at risk behavior that showed race and gender differences. Males were more likely to be involved in violence then females. Being Black or Hispanic raised the risk of being involved in violence. Single parent households showed an increase of violence of youths (Blum et al., 2000).

Poverty also affects a child social, emotional, biological, and intellectual growth and development. In 1970, the child poverty rate was 14.9% compared to 18.9% in 1988. Poverty is not equally distributed among ethnic groups or background. In 1998, 10.6% of white children under the age of 18 lived in poverty compared to 36.7% of African Americans, 34.4% of Hispanics, and 18.0% of Asians. Minority groups were significantly more likely to be at risk of living in deep poverty. Studies show that 69% of Black children have spent at least one year in poverty. Eighty-one percent of children in single parent households have lived at least one year in poverty. Ninety-nine percent of Black children, living in a single parent home, and having the parent who is head of the household having an education of 12 years or less have lived in poverty compared to 15% of children who are white, live in two parent households and have the head of the household possessing at least twelve years of education. Living in poverty, children often experience poor physical and mental health, do worse in school, and are more likely to engage in violent acts (Seccombe, 2000).

In conclusion, a decline of moral character is not only a school-based problem but a problem cited in literature. Problems in school exist due to an included an increase in staff turnovers, a diversity of staff population, a diversity of student population, and increased number of unexcused absences, and increase of an acceptance of derogatory remarks in the classroom, and a communication breakdown in the school setting. Literature has cited changes which included the following: home environment including single parent households, divorce and grandparents raising children; violence in television and internet; differing ethnic backgrounds, at-risk behaviors, and poverty were all seen as contributing factors in the deterioration of moral character. After researching the causes that affect the students' behavior, the researchers realize that not all of the causes of their lack of moral character are within their control or even can be solved. What the researchers need to determine is what teachers have the ability to control or change.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

As stated in Chapter two, the researchers named these causes for a decline in moral character. Some causes were school based problems including increased staff turnover, diversity of school population, diversity of student population, and an increased number of unexcused absences, and increase of an acceptance of derogatory remarks and a communication breakdown in the school setting. There were also literature based cause for a decline in moral character which included the following: home environment including single parent households, divorce, and grandparents raising children; violence on television and the Internet; differing ethnic backgrounds; at-risk behaviors, and poverty.

Looking through the literature, the researchers found a number of possible solutions for the lack of moral character. Four Character Educations Programs including: Character Counts, Building Esteem in Students Today, Character Development Program, and Community Caring have proven to be effective. Strategies to improve character in schools can also be implemented including school-wide

programs with literature-based lessons within the school curricula, zero tolerance policy, peer mediation, mentoring programs, and strategies for teachers and counselors.

Character Education programs in schools are making an unprecedented comeback (Lundstrom, 1999). There are four successful programs that have been adopted. Each program creates a climate in the school where everything that is done is based on the belief that good character and its values are important to the entire school community.

"Character Counts" works to advance character education by teaching the Six Pillars of Character. The pillars of character according to "Character Counts" are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. This program strives to reduce youth violence, crime, unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, and other anti-social conduct (Josephson Institute of Ethics, 2001). The "Character Counts" program is implemented school wide. The administration receives training on what "Character Counts" is and how they can help support their staff. The entire staff then receives training on how to implement the "Character Counts" pillars into their curriculum.

Another well-known program is the "Building Esteem in Students Today." "Building Esteem in Students Today," or better know as B.E.S.T. is a customized program that selects nine themes for students to study during the school year. The themes that the B.E.S.T. program covers are positive climate, curiosity, responsibility, caring and sharing, goal setting, honesty, health and prevention, conflict and feelings, and self-esteem. Theses areas covered are rotated once a month. The most important

aspect of the B.E.S.T. program is that the principal and his/her staff make it clear that character education is an expectation of the entire school. Teachers from Westover Elementary School in Silver Spring, Maryland boast that the B.E.S.T. program works when there is visible and vocal support of the principal, teachers, and parents (Robinson, 1999).

Another program which has received support is the "Character Development Program". In 1981, the California based "Character Development Program" (C.D.P.) approached character education in a new way. C.D.P. does not teach values or instill character like a typical character education program. Rather, it uses the natural desire children are born with to do the right thing while providing ways to identify appropriate behaviors by using adult, peer, and community models. It ties academics to values and unites the curriculum of the school with the values of the home and community, which creates a caring group of learners (Wiley, 2000).

There are three components to the C.D.P. program, which focus on the classroom, school wide issues and parental involvement. Classroom activities include literature-based language arts, cooperative learning, and classroom management such as extrinsic rewards and punishment. School-wide activities include family reading nights, drug-free rallies, grandperson's day, and cross-age tutoring buddies. Parental involvement includes parents being part of a school coordinating team that consists of teachers and parents that plan school-wide and grade level activites that are designed to connect home and school (Wiley, 2000).

One major benefit of C.D.P., recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, is that it is changed the culture of the school where students, parents, and teachers feel more in control (Wiley, 2000). A St. Louis School noted that conflicts had decreased by 50% since the start of C.D.P. Another benefit is that the students are achieving success both socially and academically. C.D.P. is directly tied to the curriculum, which adds to its appeal. It is rich in Gardner's Multiple Intelligences, Bloom's Taxonomy, and deep literature (Wiley, 2000).

Another well developed program is "Community Caring." Founded by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, a project of the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation, "Community of Caring" is an integrated approach which involve the school community by providing a transformation of the school environment. It focus on core values including caring, respect, responsibility, trust, and family. The goal of the program is for students to grow toward adulthood with a clear understanding of purpose; a sense of community and not self-centered individualism. The components of "Community of Caring" include the following: teacher and staff training, a site facilitator, a coordinating committee, a comprehensive action plan, values across the curriculum, student forums/class meetings, family and community involvement, and service learning. In 1991, the three year evaluation was conducted in two school systems. The report showed students had a stronger sense of helping others, attended more to personal health issues, established stronger relationship within their family, and maintained lasting peer relationships (Jones & Stoodley, 1999).

In addition to these strategies, Curriculum Review states there are four ways to build character in the classroom. One strategy is teaching literature-based lessons through heroic stories such as Aesop fables, King Arthur, Anne Frank's Diary, and the Odyssey. Another way to build character is to hold students accountable for their actions, in order to build a caring community, create a mentoring or buddy program. A third way to build character is to stress etiquette and manners. Yet another strategy is encouraging service clubs. Creating a community garden is an example of teaching hands-on environment lessons (Curriculum Review, 2001).

A strategy that had proved invaluable was adopting a zero tolerance policy, which prohibited vulgar and obscene language and the display of any graffiti including gang symbols (Ries, 1999). Along with those strategies, a peer mediation program was implemented as a powerful way to increase self esteem and communicate a sense of right and wrong. Peer mediation is a structured process, which consist of specific steps to help children define and solve a problem. There have been developmental and social psychological theories behind why peer mediation is successful. Students entering adolescence craved more independence. Peer mediation foster independence while emphasizing effective communication (Daunic, Smith, & Robinson, 2000).

Peer mediation is a voluntary process and the process of peer mediation follows certain steps. First, the mediator opens the session with an introduction and sets the ground rules such as no interruptions, no kind of abuse (physical/verbal), no lying. Second, the complainant states his/her case. By doing this, they define the conflict, state what has happened, and express their feelings without blaming anyone. Third, the

respondent will tell his side of the issue, state what has happened, and express his feelings without blaming anyone. Fourth, the mediator will restate/summarize the information. At this time, the mediator may ask questions for clarification. Fifth, the mediator will ask the disputants to propose/suggest a win-win solution. Last, if an agreement can be reached, the mediator will write a contract and both disputants will sign it. If an agreement can not be reached, the mediator will suggest to the disputants that they could try another peer mediation session or another form of conflict resolution such as arbitration (Michlowski, 1999).

There are many benefits to an effective peer mediation program. It can provide students with a framework for resolving conflict. Students will assume more responsibility for their actions with a peer mediation program. Another benefit is the reduction of the number of conflicts which will reduce the teacher's stress. In addition, peer mediation can increase instructional time by allowing teachers more time to teach the content than address student conflicts. Most importantly, students can better understand cultural diversity, which will enhance communications and interactions (Daunic, Smith, & Robinson, 2000).

Because of the benefits of peer mediation programs, a decline in overall office referrals and in referrals specific to disruptive and aggressive behavior was seen (Daunic, Smith, & Robinson, 1999). In 1994, a University of Minnesota study found that schools with effective peer mediation programs reported that conflicts referred to them decreased by 80 percent (Lundstrom, 1999). In 1993, a high school in Colorado noted a 50 percent decrease in verbal and physical harassment which was maintained over

four years, a 30 percent decrease in behavioral reports, and a 20 percentile-point increase in standardized achievement test scores (Lundstrom, 1999).

In addition to character education programs, strategies, and peer mediation, mentoring is an effective technique to improve moral character. Mentors are adults who assume quasi-parental roles as advisors and role models for young people to whom they are unrelated (Hamilton & Hamilton, 1992). It is a relationship based upon trust and sincere desires for growth and learning (Goff & Torrance, 1999). The mentors are trained to assume the three interrelated roles of caregiver, model, and mentor. According to the Center, mentors maximize their influence on young people when they serve as: (1) effective caregivers who treat their younger students with respect and worthwhile, helping them succeed at program activities; (2) moral models who demonstrate a high level of respect and responsibility in their interactions with others and discuss moral significant events; and (3) ethical mentors who provide direct instruction and guidance through explanation, storytelling, discussion, encouragement of positive behavior, and corrective feedback when students engage in behavior that is hurtful to themselves or others (Muscott & O'Brien, 1999).

There is much support for mentoring programs. Secretaries of the U.S. Department of Education and Labor have been prominent advocators of mentoring, as have the heads of several major foundations. President Bush emphasized volunteerism as a response to social problems (Hamilton & Hamilton, 1992). There is also support and funding available for after school programs. New funding streams for after-school programs have been growing rapidly. Funding for the U.S. Department of Education's

21st Century Community Learning Centers program, which provides three-year grants to schools, has increased from $1 million in 1997 to more than $800 million in 2001. In addition, at least 26 states plan to increase funding for extra learning opportunities. California's $85 million After-School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnership Project, Kentucky's $37 million Extended School Services, and Maryland's $10 million After-School Opportunity Fund are just a few examples (Miller, 2001).

The results of an effective mentoring program are notable. After three years in a program that emphasized motivation, 50% of the participants met the qualifications for the gifted programs in their respective school systems. The same phenomenon is seen in mentoring programs. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds might be identified and motivated to achieve well in school as a result of mentoring. Gifted Child Today presented evidence that mentors clearly make a difference. Men and women with mentors complete more education than those without mentors do. Innovative mentoring programs can provide children and youth with constructive alternatives to delinquent behavior if mentors instill pride in their mentees, aid in creating positive self-images, are prestigious or valued by their peers, provide adventure, and result in positive vocational strides (Goff & Torrance, 1999).

For mentoring programs to be successful, the following suggestions are offered. First employers and organizations that are willing to take on the task of finding volunteers within their ranks are a more promising source of mentors than one-at-a-time recruitment. Secondly, mentoring programs should concentrate on youths in need. Mentors need clear goals. Building competence is the most functional goal for

mentoring. Mentors need clear goals that include building confidence. Mentoring programs are intended to synthesize a natural human process that has undeniable power. There is no doubt that a close, nurturing relationship between a wise and caring adult and a youth is beneficial to both. However, the "natural" way for this to happen is that an adult and a youth gradually become close through contact in their daily lives (Hamilton & Hamilton, 1992).

There are four basic characteristics for a successful mentor relationship. One characteristic is an understanding of personal prejudice. Secondly, a courageous acceptance of personal imperfection is needed. Participants in this relationship require an enjoyment of the process of living—the means, not the end. Lastly, a development of interest in people for their own sake should exist (Goff & Torrance, 1999).

There are ten key strategies for teachers to adopt when focusing on character education. First teachers should use and encourage positive language such as "Be on time" rather than "Don't be late". Secondly teachers should encourage students to be responsible for their own behavior. This can be done by modeling choices that students can make by suggesting specific phrases of choices. A third strategy for teachers is to assign learning buddies. This will encourage new friendships, build self-esteem, and provide support among peers. Another strategy is to give students the opportunity daily/weekly to share one thing that they appreciated during the week with the teacher. The teacher can demonstrate this appreciation time at first. When new students come into the classroom, a successful strategy is to match him/her with a mentor. The mentor will help orient the new student to the school. Further, journal writing can be used in a

variety of ways to improve character education. Also teachers should use cooperative learning to help create an environment that helps foster different character traits. Also, teachers are encouraged to have literature-based discussions that deal with similar ideas to character education such as good deeds, triumphs, and failures. Another suggestion is that class meetings are a good place for making decisions. These can be held weekly or as needed. A final technique is to keep parents informed about the character education program (Pearson, Queen, & Nicholson, 2000).

There are four key strategies for counselors to adopt when focusing on character education. The primary role of the counselor is to be a consultant to administrators, teachers, and parents involved in the character education program. Secondly, counselors can meet with administrators to develop a framework for the overall character education program and identify character traits the school finds important. Counselors can also help teachers by developing behavior management plans, understanding developmental readiness, and selecting appropriate strategies to use. Lastly, counselors can help parents by providing guidance and information about situations that deal with individual children (Pearson, Queen, & Nicholson, 2000).

In conclusion, middle schools should consider adopting one or more of these solutions in order to increase moral character in schools. Possible solutions could include: adopting a character education program, including literature based lessons in the curricula, establishing a peer mediation program, initiating a mentoring program, and increasing cooperation between teachers, administrators, and counselors.

Project Objectives and Processes

As a result of the character education curriculum, during the period of January 2002 to February 2002, the seventh grade and eighth grade teams will increase achievement and appropriate behavior as measured by Observation Checklist, Interview Questions, and Direct Observation Checklist.

In order to accomplish the project objective, the following processes are necessary:

1. Develop materials that foster character education in Language Arts.
2. Select novels from grade level curricula's that enforce the importance of character.
3. Develop a series of learning activities for language arts supporting character education.
4. Locate movies for the analysis of poor behavior, as a non-example, to help define what good character is and is not.
5. Find and copy comic strips that demonstrate their understanding of positive character traits.
6. Celebrate the completing of this observation on character education as a reward for new insights gained by the students.

Project Action Plan

As a first step in this plan, the researchers will accomplish the following six processes two weeks prior to the implementation in order to prepare for the literature based lesson plans. First, the researchers will develop materials that foster character

education in language arts. Secondly, the researchers will select a novel for each grade level that enforces the importance of character. Thirdly, a series of learning activities will be developed supporting character education. Fourth, a movie will be located to be used by both grade levels for analysis of poor behavior as a non-example to help define what good character is and is not. The fifth process will be to find copies of comic strips from newspapers to allow the students to demonstrate their understanding of positive character traits. Lastly, a reward such as an edible treat will need to be purchased or made to reward the students' efforts and contributions to this research project.

One week prior to the implementation, the researchers will create materials including a data collection chart, a questionnaire, a list of interview questions, and a direct observation checklist (Appendix A).

Data collection of student behavior including demerits, detentions, and office referrals, students' grade point average and student daily attendance will be collected at three week increments. The first data collection will be gathered on January 8, 2002 for the weeks of December 3-21, 2001. The second data collection will be gathered on January 25, 2002 for the weeks of January 7-25, 2002. The third data collection will be gathered on February 15, 2002 for the weeks of January 28-February 15, 2002.

Additional information will then be collected beginning with a questionnaire on character and ethics on January 15, 2002 and February 26, 2002. Next, twelve seventh grade interviews and eight eighth grade interviews will be held the week of January 14, 2002 and during the week of February 25, 2002. All interviews will be done one at a time. Finally, data will be gathered regarding character and ethics in the school

cafeteria during the two different grade level lunch periods through direct observation. These observations will be conducted on January 15, 2002 and February 26, 2002 and tallied on a checklist.

Implementation of the following detailed six-week literature based lesson plans will begin in the language arts classes January 14, 2002 and end on February 22, 2002.

Seventh Grade Lesson Plans for Improving Achievement Through Character Education – Language Arts – Class A

Week One: January 14 – 18, 2002

Objectives:

1. The students will analyze, symbolize, and represent a positive character trait in an artistic and creative format.
2. The students will reflect about a character's positive characteristics.
3. The students will specifically define a character trait in poetic form.

1/14 – Assign and begin the Character Trait Mosaic. Students will select a character trait by drawing a character trait slip from a basket. This trait will be analyzed, symbolized, and represented in ten ways (See Appendix B for worksheet). When these are completed, they will be displayed around the classroom to refer to and think about throughout this unit.

1/15 – Introduce the novel, The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle by Avi. Handout background information, assign Chapters One through Five to be read, and discuss questions to be answered in complete sentences by 1/22. Students create a portfolio

this week and put their novel work in it. Their reflections about the novel, the character, etc. will be written in the portfolio as well.

1/16 – Write a class poem on COURAGE. Students brainstorm in small groups words or phrases that define courage first. They then will use their ideas and create one big class poem. Assign vocabulary words to be defined from the first group of chapters due 1/17.

1/17 – Turn in vocabulary in their portfolios. Provide reading and writing time in order to work independently on assignments previously assigned. By the end of the period students need to write a reflection in their portfolios.

1/18 – NO SCHOOL

Week Two: January 21 – 25, 2002

Objectives:

1. The students will analyze, symbolize, and represent a positive character trait in an artistic and creative format.
2. The students will identify a typical character's conflict and create an appropriate resolution.

1/21 – NO SCHOOL

1/22 – Share and turn in Character Trait Mosaics to be hung up and evaluated. Discuss questions in small groups and have group representatives active in a full classroom discussion. Use Socratic Questions to motivate student thinking during the discussion.

1/23 – After assigning new discussion questions, have students read the next group of chapters – six through twelve – independently. All due 1/28.

1/24 – Discuss different ideas found in comic strips. What important ideas do you think the cartoonist put in comic strips? Distribute comic strips from the newspaper that have frames omitted. As a class, brainstorm ways to finish the comic strip. Fill in different traits found in comic strips. Look around the room at posted mosaics for ideas. With a partner (student choice) continue working on comic strips to fill in empty frames. Students will fill in comic strip bubbles, continue a comic strip by drawing additional boxes, and create their own comic strip using the novel for the focus of the comic strip. (See Appendix B for worksheet). Assign vocabulary for this section of chapters due 1/25.

1/25 – Allow additional reading or work time for individuals (reading and answering questions) or pairs needing to complete the comic strip. Turn in vocabulary to portfolios. Also write a short reflection of what was read or accomplished this week.

Week Three : January 28 – February 1, 2002

Objectives:

1. The students will identify a typical character's conflict and create an appropriate resolution.
2. The students will compare and contrast their own moral character with a main character's moral character.
3. The students will create a project that emphasizes examples of bad character of an antagonist in a novel.

1/28 – Pairs of students share comic strips in front of the class and have other students called on to identify the conflicts and resolutions. A discussion of the second group of chapters will also be held.

1/29 – Assign Chapters 13 – 17 to be read and response questions to be answered by 2/4. Give time for students to read and answer questions independently.

1/30 – Give students a Venn Diagram to identify character traits that are the same and character traits that are different than theirs. Compare and contrast with themselves and one of the following main characters: Charlotte, Zachariah, or Captain Jaggery.

1/31 – Assign vocabulary from this section due 2/1. Give time for students to read or work independently on the chapters already assigned this week.

2/1 – In small groups students will be assigned different projects. These group projects include the following: research about ships and clothing from the 1800's, write an advice column to Charlotte, make a mini-dictionary of definitions and illustrations of ship terminology, hurricanes, and a wanted poster of a person in the novel with bad character. Be able to present it in a verbal and visual fashion – due 2/5. Put vocabulary into portfolio and student's reflections are to be written before students leave today.

Week Four: February 4 – 8, 2002

Objective:

1. The student will act out in groups in order to simulate an important episode containing conflict and resolution.

2/4 – Discuss the chapters from the last section in small groups first and then as a large group. Students can continue to work on small group activities from last week.

2/5 – Share the group activities which will help students all learn about ship terminology, dress and ships from the 1800's, hurricanes, advice for the main character or protagonist, Charlotte, and wanted posters of antagonists. Hang up the visuals created.

2/6 – Assign the next group of pages to be read and questions to be discussed – Chapters 18 -22. Begin reading and answering questions independently. Vocabulary word-find also assigned. All due 2/12.

2/7 – Divide the class into three groups. Each group will act out or simulate an important episode containing a conflict and resolution. The episodes to dramatize will include the following:

A. The scene on the deck as Captain Jaggery confronts the crew and tries to crush the mutiny.
B. The trial where Captain Jaggery accuses and sentences Charlotte for the crime of killing Mr. Hollybrass.
C. The heated discussion between Mr. Doyle and Charlotte over the diary she wrote.

Performances will be on February 14. Scenes will be videotaped and shown later for discussion.

2/8 – Students will have time to read or continue writing their scripts for the simulations.

Week Five : February 11 – 15, 2002

Objective:

1. The students will express their own character in a personal poem.

2/11 - NO SCHOOL

2/12 – Small group and then entire class discussions on Chapters 18 – 22. Vocabulary is checked and put into the portfolios. Write reflections of these chapters in the portfolio.

2/13 and 2/14 – Groups practice their simulations/dramatic scenes.

2/15 – Write an "I Am…" poem. Students reflect and express their own character (See Appendix B for worksheet).

Week Six : February 18 – 22, 2002

Objectives:

1. The students will act out in groups in order to simulate an important episode containing conflict and resolution.
2. The students will chart examples of positive and negative character traits.

2/18 – Simulations performed. After each simulation the conflict and how they were resolved are processed. Also what good and bad character choices that were made are analyzed.

2/19 – I Am… poems are due. Volunteers are encourage to read their poems with expression in front of the class.

2/20 – Review for the final novel test given next week. Students create their own study guide with teacher guidance.

2/21 – Show the movie, The Mighty. While students are viewing the video, they are to complete a T-Chart listing examples of good and bad character. (See Appendix B for worksheet)

2/22 – NO SCHOOL

The following Eighth Grade Lesson Plans for Improving Achievement through Character Education were implemented in Language Arts – Class B.

Week One: January 14-18, 2002

Objectives:

1. The students will analyze, symbolize, and represent a positive character trait in an artistic and creative format.
2. The students will define and reflect about characters positive and negative character traits.

1/14 - Role-play "I Saw the Whole Thing" activity. Start brainstorming Character traits- teacher will write all traits that students mention on butcher paper to be hung up in the room. Role-play "Let's Upgrade!". Discuss the role of responsibility, fairness, and cooperation. Popcorn read Novel Notes (each child takes a turn reading, picking the next reader after a paragraph). Search for more information about author on different websites

Homework: "A 'Truthful' Title" dealing with integrity, honesty, truthfulness

1/15 - Discuss homework assignment "A 'Truthful' Title". Discuss integrity, honesty, and truthfulness. Introduce Character Trait Mosaic. Students will draw a playing card that will tell them what group they will be working in and on what character trait they will be working on (See Appendix B for worksheet). The groups will then spend time each day during the week creating a mosaic on their assigned character trait. Distribute Reading Skills and Strategies worksheet. 34-35 & 43-44.

1/16 - Read Chapters 1-3 (pg. 1-14) as a class. Discuss the writing style of the book-documentary. Work on group mosaic- Jan. 22

Homework: On a Post-It™ note, write one main character and their most noticeable character trait (students can look around the room and list the traits in their notebook to refer to.)

1/17 - Discuss homework-- Post It™ notes on character and their most noticeable character trait. Have students share their Post It™ notes and then they will place on butcher paper that has each character name listed on it. Read Chapters 4-7 (pg. 15-23) with a partner, discuss what it happening in the story. Work on group mosaic- due Jan. 22

Homework: work on mosaic- Have it ready to turn in on Tuesday 1/22

1/18 -No School--Teacher Institute

Week Two: January 21-25, 2002

Objectives:

1. The students will analyze, symbolize, and represent a positive character trait in an artistic and creative format.
2. The students will define and reflect about characters positive and negative character traits.
3. The students will give examples of character traits of one of the main characters in the novel through a character sketch visual.

1/21 - No School- Martin Luther King's Birthday

1/22 - Collect Character Trait Mosaic and post in room and hallways after students present in a group their mosaic. Read Chapters 8-9 (pg. 24-39) by self.

Homework: Complete reading Chapters 8-9 (pg. 24-39)

1/23 - Discuss different ideas found in comic strips. What important ideas do you think the cartoonist put in comic strips? Distribute comic strips from the newspaper that have frames omitted. As a class, brainstorm ways to finish the comic strip. Fill in different traits found in comic strips. Look around the room at posted mosaics for ideas. With a partner (student choice) continue working on comic strips to fill in empty frames. Students will fill in comic strip bubbles, continue a comic strip by drawing additional boxes, and create their own comic strip using the novel for the focus of the comic strip. (See Appendix B for worksheet). Partner comic strips due Jan. 25

1/24 - Read Chapter 10 (pg. 40-58) as a class. Students will pick parts to read aloud. Discuss what is happening in the story. Complete Tracking Problems worksheet as a class.

Homework: finish Tracking Problems worksheet and Making Meanings worksheet.

1/25 - Pop quiz on Chapters 1-10. Teacher will write "Reading Check" questions a-e on butcher paper. Students will answer questions on own paper. Finish working on partner comic strips--15 minutes. In literature groups (student choice, 3 to 4 students in a group), do "Getting Along" worksheet 15 to discuss communication, compassion, justice, equality, and tolerance.

Homework: Draw a character sketch of Philip or Miss Narwin. Draw a visual picture on either character. Pointing to different body parts- indicate different qualities or scenes

from the book (i.e. point to heart to indicate the character has a big heart, cold heart, broken heart...).

Week Three: January 28- February 1, 2002

Objectives:

1. The students will compare and contrast character traits that might fall under the phrase "carpe diem".
2. The students will identify a typical character's conflict and create an appropriate resolution.
3. The students will compare and contrast their own moral character with a main character's moral character.

1/28 - Read Novel Notes- Issue 2 "Carpe diem." Discuss what character trait carpe diem might fall under (courage, honor, confidence, assertiveness, and wisdom). Read Chapter 11-12 (pg. 49-86) with a partner. Students can sit on carpet/reading squares.

Homework: Update Novel Organizer worksheet

1/29 - Complete Chapter 11-12 "Relating Characters" worksheet 37 as a class. Answer Making Meanings worksheet 16 in literature groups.

1/30 - Pop quiz on Chapters 11-12. Teacher will write "Reading Check" questions a-e on butcher paper. Students will answer questions on own paper. Complete "Conflict Busters" activity. Discuss and work with cooperation, honesty, fairness, equality, and justice.

Homework: Complete Vocabulary worksheet #1 and read Novel Notes #3.

1/31 - Discuss "Conflict Busters" activity and Novel Notes #3. Correct Vocabulary worksheet #1. Complete Venn diagram. Students will fill in Venn diagram comparing them to a character in the novel. Students will then complete the "Taking Another Step" section on worksheet (writing activity).

Homework: Complete Venn Diagram and Taking Another Step writing activity

2/1 - Work on Research Paper (not part of the project)

Week Four: February 4-8, 2002

Objective:

1. The students will act out in groups in order to simulate an important episode containing conflict and resolution.

2/4 - Read Chapters 13-15 (pg. 87-139) with class/ self (class vote). Discuss what is happening in story. Introduce Group Simulations projects. Students will role-play (act out) a scene from Chapters 13-15. Students will get these scenes from the "Summarizing the Plot" worksheet 38.

2/5 - Discuss Making Meanings questions.

Work on group simulations. Students decide who is going to be what character, how to act out, props to have, etc... Schedule group simulations. Students can sign up or teacher can draw numbers out of a hat.

2/6 - Work on group simulations. Groups will present on 2/7 and 2/8

2/7 - Group Simulations. See schedule that was made on 2/5.

2/8 - Group Simulations. See schedule that was made on 2/5.

Week Five: February 11-15, 2002

Objective:

1. The students will express their own character, as well as Philip and Miss Narwin's character in a personal poem.

2/11 – No School – Teacher Institute

2/12 - No School – Lincoln's Birthday

2/13 - Read Chapter 16 (pg. 140-167) alone. Students can use carpet/reading squares.

2/14 - Discuss Chapter 16 as a class. Read chapter 17 (pg. 168-177) as a class. Discuss Making Meanings worksheet. Introduce "I Am" poem (See Appendix B for worksheet). Student will create a "I Am" poem of each of the following: Philip, Miss Narwin, self, and one minor character. Students will then fill out a Triple Venn Diagram comparing themselves with 2 other characters using their "I Am" poems for a reference. Homework: "I Am" poems (4) and Triple Venn Diagram.

2/15 - Pop quiz on Chapters 16-19. Teacher will write "Reading Check" questions a-e butcher paper. Students will answer questions on own paper. Discuss and fill out Identifying Consequences worksheet 39. Discuss why it is relevant to character traits. Homework: Vocabulary worksheet #2.

Week Six: February 18-22, 2002

Objective:

1. The students will chart examples of positive and negative character traits.

2/18 - Complete Point of View worksheet 40 and Conflict worksheet 41 and Irony worksheet 42 with a partner. Correct above worksheets as a class.

Homework: TEST over Novel Wednesday Feb. 20!

2/19 - Review for test. Work on research paper (not part of project)

2/20 - TEST on Novel.

2/21 - Watch the movie "The Mighty". Discuss why it is similar to the novel "Nothing but the Truth" by Avi. Complete the T-Chart on behaviors while watching the movie. Can work with a partner if necessary. Students will find inappropriate behaviors during the movie and will think of alternative behaviors the character could have done instead (See Appendix B for work sheet).

Methods of Assessment

The researchers will collect information regarding student behavior including demerits, detentions, and office referrals, student grade point average (GPA), and student daily attendance. A sample of the direct observation checklist on behaviors can be found in Appendix B through the attached checklist. The subjects are 120 seventh grade students and 100 eighth grade students from the same middle school. The data collection is reliable because school policy clearly dictates what behaviors would result in a demerit, detention, and office referral. The third data collection will be gathered on February 15, 2002 for the weeks of January 28- February 15, 2002. Data collected by the two researchers' team documentation of demerits, detentions, and office referrals. Attendance and grade point average was obtained through the school office. All students will be coded and no names will be used in the research. The purpose of this observation is to find a direct correlation among student's behavior, grade point average (GPA), and daily attendance.

The researchers will collect information regarding character and ethics in middle school students through a questionnaire (Appendix A). To insure validity the researchers conducting the study will administer the questionnaire. Information will be collect February 26, 2002 during the students' advisory period. Questions are adapted from a survey conducted by the Josephson Institute of Ethics. The researchers adapted their open-ended questions to closed questions with an "agree/disagree" response choice. Vocabulary was also adapted to be easily comprehended at the middle school level. The following procedures will be used in collecting the data. Students will complete the 25-question survey within a 10-minute window. Students will be ask to be honest in answering all questions, there was no right or wrong answer, and in no way will their answers affect their grades. The students will also be given the purpose of the questionnaire, which is to analyze students' attitudes toward honesty and integrity. The purpose of the interviews will help the researchers understand what students defined as character, if they saw character as being related to success, and what kinds of traits students believed to be qualities of character.

The researchers will interview 12 seventh graders and 10 eighth grade students from the same middle school regarding three key questions. These students will be selected from the total sample of 220 students by listing students alphabetically, and selecting every 10th student as an interviewee. The questions that the students will be asked are as follows: 'What is your definition of character?' 'How important do you feel character is to being successful?' and 'Name some traits that are important for a person with good character.' A sample of the interview worksheet can be found in the

Appendix A. To increase the reliability of the study, all interview questions will be asked in the same order. The two researchers doing this study will present during the interviews. These interviews will be conducted the week of February 25, 2002 after the intervention. The week chosen is a "normal" school week that is not interrupted by holidays, assemblies, or the week before or after holidays or events. The students will be interviewed individually in a team conference room where they will not have any distractions or peer interactions during their morning advisory period. The following procedures will be used in collecting the data. Students will be asked to be honest in answering all questions, there was no right or wrong answer, and in no way their answers affected their grades. The students were also given the purpose of the interview, which helped the researchers determine the affects of character education and its effects on student achievement. The purpose of these interviews that were used to helped the researchers understand what students define as character, if they see character as being related to success, and what kinds of traits students believe to be qualities of character.

The researchers will gather data regarding character and ethics in middle school students through observation of student behavior in the school cafeteria. The two researchers during their respective lunch periods will collect the data. The researchers will move alongside the other adult lunchroom supervisors. The researchers will observe only the students. They will not discipline or interfere with the lunchroom activity unless the safety or health of a student is involved. The lunch periods are one half hour in length and will be collected February 26, 2002. Cafeteria behaviors that are

observed will be tallied on a checklist (Appendix A). These behaviors that are observed reflected a respect for others, manners, and social responsibility. The specific behaviors that will be tallied include the number of times students cut in line and use phrases such as "please", "thank you", and "excuse me" while in the cafeteria line. While students are seated these behaviors will also be noted: keeping hands to themselves, taking care of their own garbage, and using derogatory remarks. The purpose of this observation will be to assess behaviors that reflect middle school character traits.

In conclusion, the researchers found the following solutions in the literature. First, the solutions of mentoring and peer mediation address the causes of differing ethnic backgrounds and poverty by providing educational and emotional support to those in need. In addition, the solutions of mentoring and peer mediation, along with Character Counts character education program address the cause of at-risk behavior. Both the Community Caring and Character Building Program (C.D.P.) character education programs are solutions that address the cause of home environment since they establish stronger relationships with family and tie academic values of the school with home and community. Next, the Building Esteem in Students Today (B.E.S.T.) character education program is a solution that addresses the communication breakdown in the school setting by requiring the principal and his or her staff to make it clear that character education is an expectation of the entire school. Furthermore, the solution of zero tolerance addresses the problem of increased acceptance of derogatory remarks. The researchers, however, found no solutions to the following causes: the

diversity of staff and student population, an increased number of unexcused absences, and the violence on television and the Internet.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objective of this project was to address the lack of moral character of seventh and eighth grade students through the main implementation of literature-based lessons within the school curricula. All implementations were done during January 2002 to February 2002.

Implementation of the literature-based lessons began on January 14, 2002 and were concluded within six weeks ending on February 26, 2002 in both the seventh and eighth grade language arts classes. Six weeks of lesson plans were created in which students learned from main characters in the class novels they read. By analyzing the traits of main characters in literature, comparing and contrasting traits of their own with that of the main characters, and learning from the conflicts and resolutions characters in the novels faced, they better understood their own positive traits, identified with conflicts, and made positive resolutions to their own problems.

During the same six-week period additional implementations also took place during the school day. First, data collections of behavior, attendance, and G.P.A. were gathered on January 8, 2002 by the researcher from Class A and researcher in Class B.

Data was obtained and tallied from team behavior charts, attendance records from the school office, and team grade reports by the researchers. Secondly, a questionnaire regarding their opinions about ethical and moral choices was given to all students on January 15, 2002 on both the seventh and eighth grade teams. The responses were tallied and categorized by the researchers. Next, interviews took place on January 14, 2002 between student volunteers from both grade levels and the respective grade level researchers. The students were interviewed by the researchers one at a time about each student's definition of character, ranking of character on a scale of one to ten, and character traits the students consider to be most important, and responses were recorded and categorized by the researchers. Finally, the researchers directly observed their own students during their lunch periods on January 15, 2002. They watched the students' use of respect toward others in the cafeteria line and while the students were seated, use of manners including words such as "please" and "thank you" while in the cafeteria line, use of derogatory remarks while seated, and social responsibility of disposing their own garbage at the end of the lunch period. Their observations were tallied under the behavior categories on a chart.

Post assessment of each of the additional implementations occurred six weeks later again during the school day. Each researcher collected behavior, attendance, and G.P.A. data on February 15, 2002. Secondly, questionnaires were administered and results were tallied a second time by the each researcher on February 26, 2002. Then a set of second interviews was held on February 25, 2002 with the responses being

again noted. Lastly, the researchers observed the same students during the same lunch periods on February 26, 2002 and these new results were tallied.

Two alterations to the lesson plans in the action plan were made during the six week implementation period. Due to scheduling conflicts, the researcher/language arts teacher of Class A needed to show the movie, The Mighty, one day earlier from the original scheduled plan and the review of the novel test and the test itself were postponed until the next week after the six week implementation period. Secondly, due to an illness, the researcher/language arts teacher of Class B had a substitute on the first day during the first week of the six-week implementation. The substitute taught the lesson for the day exactly as it was indicated in the lesson plan.

In conclusion, literature-based instruction and a tallying of data was conducted from January 2002 to February 2002. The novels studied in each grade level of language arts classes were taught and character traits, conflicts, and resolutions were analyzed. Data gathering from behavior, attendance, and G.P.A. school records, as well as questionnaires, interviews, and cafeteria behavior observations were all conducted at the beginning and end of the implementation process.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

The post behavior checklist, the post student questionnaire, the post student interview, and the post observation checklist on cafeteria behavior were analyzed by the teachers/researchers. Comparisons were made between the pre and post behavior checklist, pre and post student questionnaire, pre and post student interview, and pre and post observation checklist on cafeteria behavior.

The first instrument, a behavior checklist (Appendix A), was collected by the researchers on February 15, 2002 for the weeks of January 28- February 15, 2002, six weeks after the implementation began which targeted 7th and 8th grade Language Arts students. The researchers collected the same data as the checklist collected in January 2002. The data was compiled in Figures 9-18, which display the pre and post results of the behavior checklist.

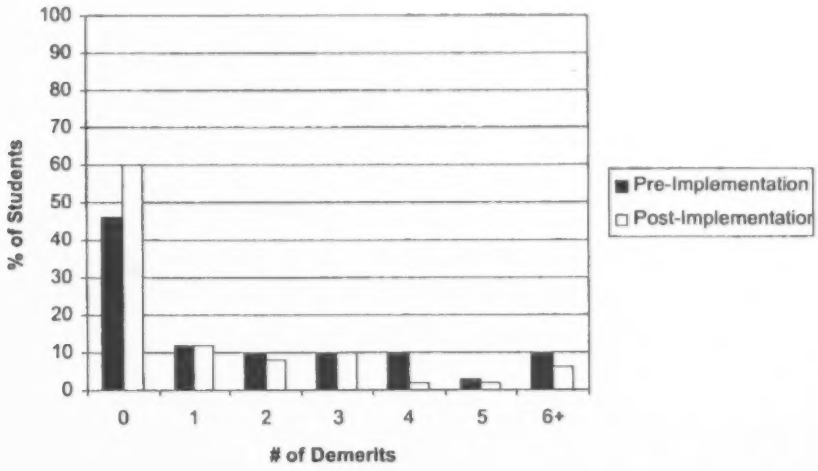

Figure 9. Pre and post results of demerit infractions for Language Arts Class A

Figure 9 shows the comparison of pre and post demerit infractions for Language Arts Class A. Forty-six percent of the students received zero demerits before the implementation compared to 60% after the implementation. Twelve percent of the students received one demerit before the implementation and after the implementation. Ten percent of the students received two demerits pre-implementation compared to 8% post-implementation. Ten percent of the students received three demerits pre-implementation and post-implementation. Before the implementation, 10% of the

students received four demerits compared to 2% after the implementation. Three percent of the students received five demerits pre-implementation compared to 2% of the students post-implementation. Ten percent of the students received six or more demerits for pre-implementation whereas 6% of the students received six or more demerits for post-implementation. To summarize, the majority of the students received less demerits after the implementation than before the implementation began.

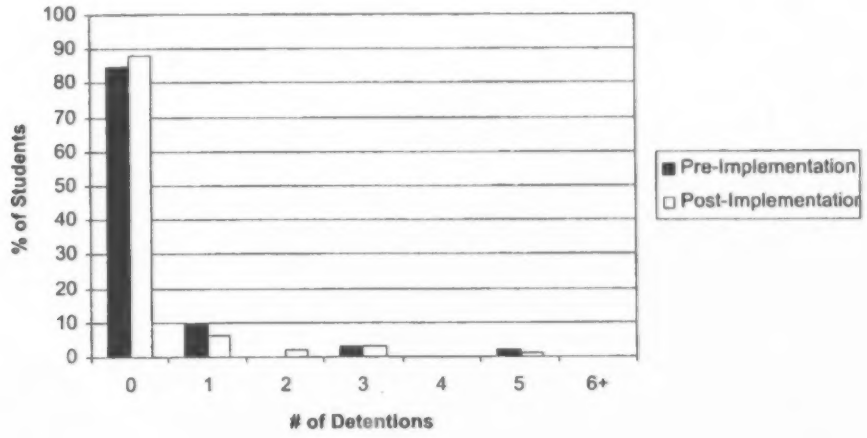

Figure 10. Pre and post results of detention infractions for Language Arts Class A

Figure 10 shows the comparison of pre and post detention infractions for Language Arts Class A. Eighty-five percent of the students received zero detentions before the implementation compared to 88% after the implementation. Ten percent of the students received one detention before the implementation compared to 6% after the implementation. None of the students received two detentions pre-implementation compared to 2% post-implementation. Three percent of the students received three detentions pre-implementation as well as post-implementation. None of the students

received four detentions for either the pre-implementation and post-implementation. Prior to implementation, two percent of the students received five detentions compared to 1% post-implementation. None of the students received six or more detentions both pre- and post-implementation. To summarize, the majority of the students received less detentions after the implementation than before the implementation began.

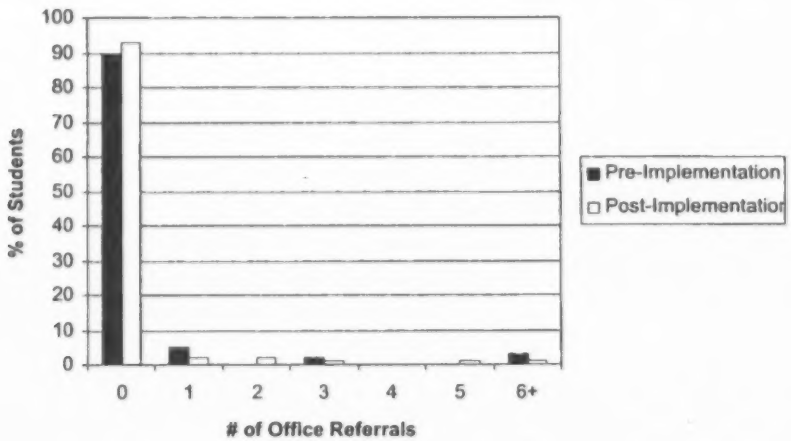

Figure 11. Pre and post results of office referral infractions for Language Arts Class A

Figure 11 shows the comparison of pre and post office referrals infractions for Language Arts Class A. Ninety percent of the students received zero office referrals before the implementation compared to 93% after the implementation. Five percent of the students received one office referral before the implementation compared to 2% after the implementation. None of the students received two office referrals pre-implementation compared to 2% post-implementation. Two percent of the students received three office referrals pre-implementation compared to 1% post-implementation. None of the students received four office referrals before or after the implementation.

None of the students received five office referrals pre-implementation compared to 1% post-implementation. Three percent of the students received six or more office referrals prior to implementation whereas 1% post-implementation. To summarize, the majority of the students received less office referrals after the implementation than before the implementation began.

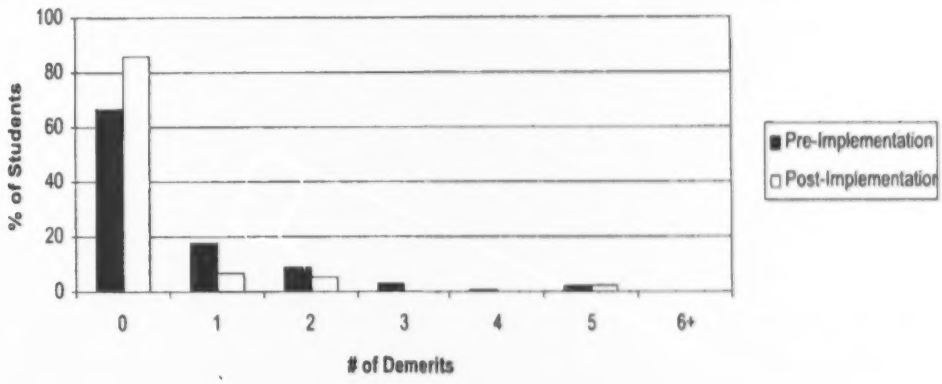

Figure 12. Pre and post results of demerit infractions for Language Arts Class B

Figure 12 shows the comparison of pre and post demerit infractions for Language Arts Class B. Sixty-seven percent of the students received zero demerits before the implementation compared to 86% after the implementation. Eighteen percent of the students received one demerit before the implementation compared to 7% after the implementation. Nine percent of the students received two demerits pre-implementation compared to 5% post-implementation. Three percent of the students received three demerits pre-implementation compared to 0% post-implementation. Before the implementation, 1% of the students received four demerits compared to 0% after the implementation. Two percent of the students received five demerits and none

of the students received six or more demerits for both pre-implementation and post-implementation. To summarize, the majority of the students received less demerits after the implementation than before the implementation began.

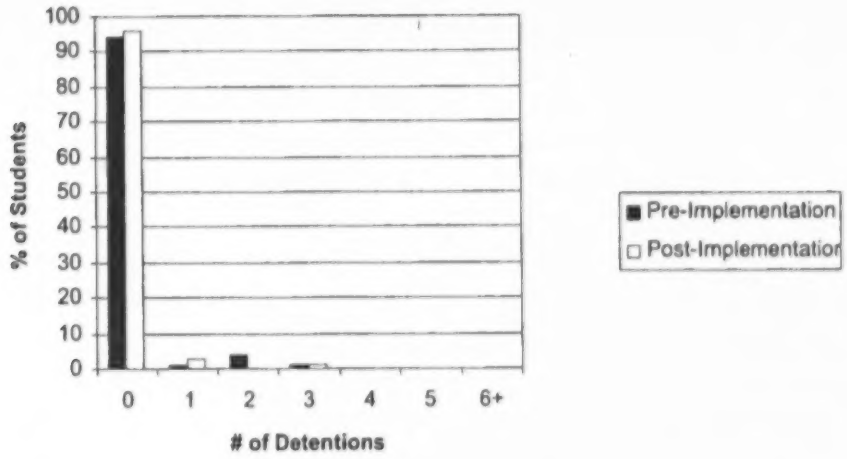

Figure 13. Pre and post results of detention infractions for Language Arts Class B

Figure 13 shows the comparison of pre and post detention infractions for Language Arts Class B. Ninety-four percent of the students received zero detentions before the implementation compared to 96% after the implementation. One percent of the students received one detention before the implementation compared to 3% after the implementation. Four percent of the students received two detentions pre-implementation compared to 0% post-implementation. One percent of the students received three detentions pre-implementation as well as post-implementation. None of the students received four or more detentions for either pre-implementation and post-implementation. To summarize, the majority of the students received less detentions after the implementation than before the implementation began.

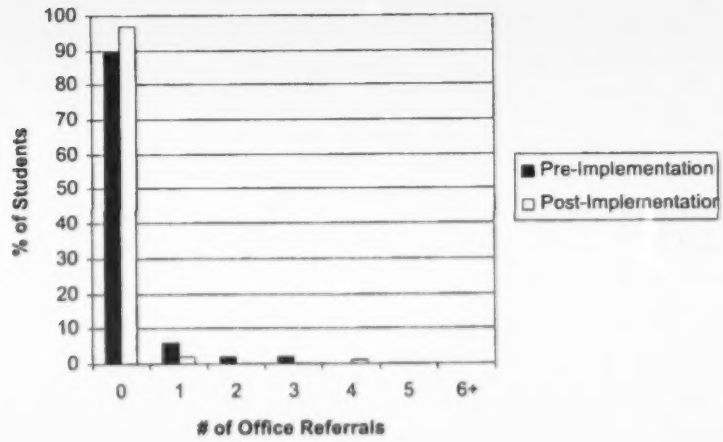

Figure 14. Pre and post results of office referrals infractions for Language Arts Class B

Figure 14 shows the comparison of pre and post office referrals infractions for Language Arts Class B. Ninety percent of the students received zero office referrals before the implementation compared to 97% after the implementation. Six percent of the students received one office referral before the implementation compared to 2% after the implementation. Two percent of the students received two office referrals pre-implementation compared to 0% post-implementation. Two percent of the students received three office referrals pre-implementation compared to 0% post-implementation. Before the implementation, none of the students received four office referrals compared to 1% after the implementation. None of the students received five or more office referrals for either pre-implementation and post-implementation. To summarize, the majority of the students received less office referrals after the implementation than before the implementation began.

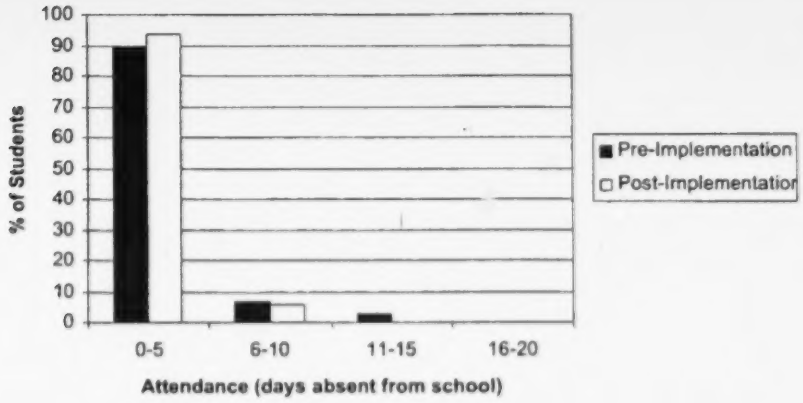

Figure 15. Pre and post attendance results for Language Arts Class A

Figure 15 shows the comparison of the number of days students were absent from school for Language Arts Class A pre-implementation versus post-implementation. Of the 115 students in Language Arts Class A, 90% of the students were absent zero to five days prior to implementation compared to 94% after implementation. Prior to implementation, 7% of the students were absent six to ten days compared to 6% after implementation. Three percent of the students were absent eleven to fifteen days pre-implementation compared to none of the students post-implementation. None of the students was absent for sixteen to twenty days before the implementation or after the implementation. Overall, the attendance of the students in Language Arts Class A improved after the implementation.

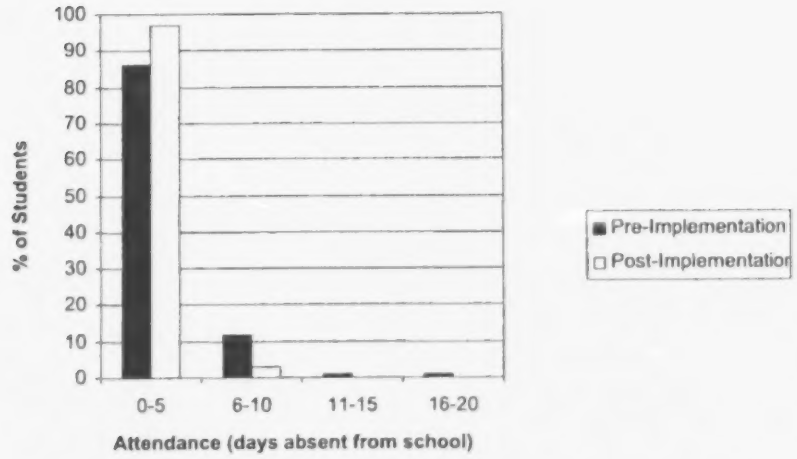

Figure 16. Pre and post attendance results for Language Arts Class B

Figure 16 shows the comparison of the number of days students were absent from school for Language Arts Class B pre-implementation versus post-implementation. Of the 90 students in Language Arts Class B, 86% of the students were absent zero to five days prior to implementation compared to 97% after implementation. Prior to implementation, 12% of the students were absent six to ten days compared to 3% after implementation. One percent of the students were absent eleven to fifteen days pre-implementation compared to none of the students post-implementation. One percent of the students were absent for sixteen to twenty days before the implementation compared to none of the students after the implementation. Overall, the attendance of the students in Language Arts Class B improved greatly after the implementation.

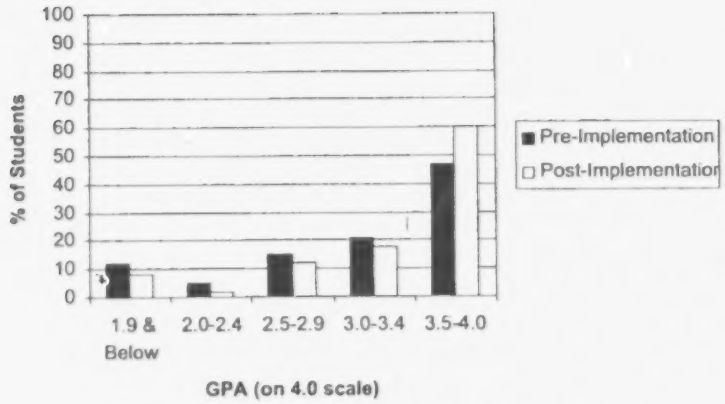

Figure 17. Pre and post GPA results for Language Arts Class A

Figure 17 shows the comparison of the students' grade point average (GPA) for Language Arts Class A pre-implementation versus post-implementation. Of the 115 students in Language Arts Class A, 12% of the students earned a 1.9 grade point average or below prior to implementation compared to 8% after implementation. Five percent of the students earned a 2.0 to 2.4 grade point average pre-implementation compared to 2% post-implementation. Prior to implementation, 15% of the students earned a 2.5 to 2.9 grade point average compared to 12% after implementation. Twenty-one percent of the students earned a 3.0 to 3.4 grade point average pre-implementation compared to 18% post-implementation. Prior to implementation, 47% of the student earned a 3.5 to 4.0 grade point average compared to 60% after the implementation. Overall, students' grade point average improved after the implementation.

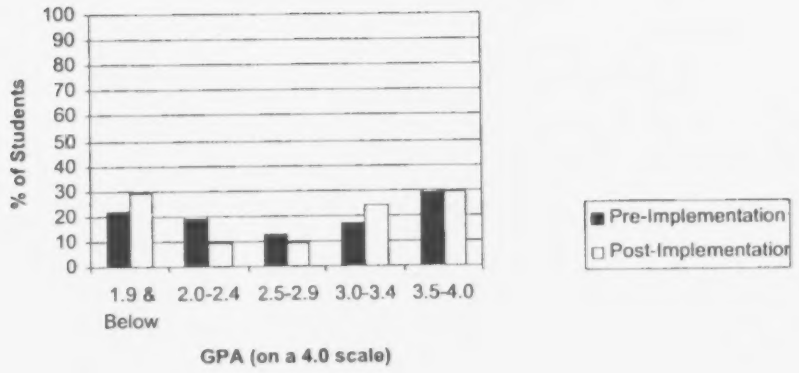

Figure 18. Pre and post GPA results for Language Arts Class B

Figure 18 shows the comparison of the students' grade point average (GPA) for Language Arts Class B pre-implementation versus post-implementation. Of the 90 students in Language Arts Class B, 22% of the students earned a 1.9 grade point average or below prior to implementation compared to 29% after implementation. Nineteen percent of the students earned a 2.0 to 2.4 grade point average pre-implementation compared to 9% post-implementation. Prior to implementation, 13% of the students earned a 2.5 to 2.9 grade point average compared to 9% after implementation. Seventeen percent of the students earned a 3.0 to 3.4 grade point average pre-implementation compared to 24% post-implementation. Prior to implementation, 29% of the student earned a 3.5 to 4.0 grade point average compared to 29% after the implementation. Overall, students' grade point average showed mixed results after the implementation. There were increases in both the 3.0-3.4 and 1.9 & below ranges.

The second instrument, a student questionnaire on character beliefs (Appendix A), was collected by the researchers on February 26, 2002, six weeks after the implementation began which targeted 7th and 8th grade Language Arts students. The researchers collected the same data as the questionnaire collected in January 2002. The data was compiled in Tables 7 and 8, which display the pre and post results of the student questionnaire.

Table 7. Categories and response of student questionnaire on character for Language Arts Class A pre-implementation and post-implementation

Student Questionnaire Categories	% of Students who Agree Pre-Implementation	% of Students who Disagree Pre-Implementation	% of Students who Agree Post Implementation	% of Students who Disagree Post-Implementation
Integrity	78%	22%	82%	18%
Honesty	42%	58%	43%	57%
Honor	89%	11%	96%	4%
Truthfulness	44%	56%	37%	63%
Wealth	83%	17%	81%	19%
Religion	94%	6%	95%	5%
Trustworthiness	80%	20%	92%	8%
Respect	77%	23%	93%	7%

Table 7 shows the comparison of the results of the student questionnaire for Language Arts Class A pre-implementation versus post-implementation. Of the 115

students in Language Arts Class A, 78% of the students agreed and 22% of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of integrity pre-implementation whereas, 82% of the students agreed and 18% of the students disagreed with the importance of integrity post-implementation. Forty-two percent of the students agreed and 58% of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of honesty before the implementation compared to 43% of the students agreed and 57% of the students disagreed with the importance of honesty after the implementation. Eighty-nine percent of the students agreed and 11% of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of honor prior to implementation whereas, 96% of the students agreed and 4% of the students disagreed with the importance of honor. Before the implementation, forty-four percent of the students agreed and 56% of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of truthfulness compared to 37% of the students agreed and 63% of the students disagreed with the importance of truthfulness after the implementation. Eighty-three percent of the students agreed and 17% of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of wealth prior implementation compared to 81% of the students agreed and 19% of the students disagreed with the importance of wealth after implementation. Pre-implementation, ninety-four percent of the students agreed and four percent of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of religion whereas, 95% of the students agreed and 5% of the students disagreed with the importance of religion post-implementation. Eighty percent of the students agreed and 20% of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of

trustworthiness before the implementation compared to 92% of the students agreed and 8% of the students disagreed with the importance of trustworthiness after the implementation. Before the implementation, seventy-seven percent of the students agreed and 23% of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of respect whereas, 93% of the students agreed and 7% of the students disagreed with the importance of respect.

In summary, honor was the top category that students felt was important, increasing 7%. Religion was second increasing 1%. Third was respect increasing 16%. Trustworthiness increased 12% ranking fourth. Fifth rank was integrity increasing 4%. Wealth was sixth decreasing 2%. Honesty increased 1% ranking seventh. The final category was truthfulness decreasing 8% on the categories that students felt were important.

Table 8. Categories and response of student questionnaire on character for Language Arts Class B pre-implementation and post-implementation

Student Questionnaire Categories	% of Student who Agree Pre-Implementation	% of Students who Disagree Pre-Implementation	% of Students who Agree Post-Implementation	% of Students who Disagree Post-Implementation
Integrity	76%	24%	74%	26%
Honesty	33%	67%	34%	66%
Honor	83%	17%	90%	10%
Truthfulness	55%	45%	57%	43%
Wealth	70%	30%	88%	12%
Religion	82%	18%	76%	24%
Trustworthiness	94%	6%	98%	2%
Respect	96%	4%	100%	0%

Table 8 shows the comparison of the results of the student questionnaire for Language Arts Class B pre-implementation versus post-implementation. Of the 90 students in Language Arts Class B, 76% of the students agreed and 24% of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of integrity pre-implementation whereas, 74% of the students agreed and 26% of the students disagreed with the importance of integrity post-implementation. Thirty-three percent of the students agreed and 67% of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the

importance of honesty before the implementation compared to 34% of the students agreed and 66% of the students disagreed with the importance of honesty after the implementation. Eighty-three percent of the students agreed and 17% of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of honor prior to implementation whereas, 90% of the students agreed and 10% of the students disagreed with the importance of honor. Before the implementation, 55% of the students agreed and 45% of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of truthfulness compared to 57% of the students agreed and 43% of the students disagreed with the importance of truthfulness after the implementation. Seventy percent of the students agreed and 30% of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of wealth prior implementation compared to 88% of the students agreed and 12% of the students disagreed with the importance of wealth after implementation. Pre-implementation, 82% of the students agreed and 18% of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of religion whereas, 76% of the students agreed and 24% of the students disagreed with the importance of religion post-implementation. Ninety-four percent of the students agreed and 6% of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of trustworthiness before the implementation compared to 98% of the students agreed and 2% of the students disagreed with the importance of trustworthiness after the implementation. Before the implementation, 96% of the students agreed and 4% of the students disagreed with questions dealing with the importance of respect whereas, 100% of the students agreed and none of the students disagreed with the importance of respect.

In summary, respect was the top category that students felt was important, increasing 4%. Trustworthiness was second increasing 4%. Third was honor increasing 7%. Wealth increased 18% ranking fourth. Fifth rank was religion decreasing 6%. Integrity was sixth decreasing 2%. Truthfulness increased 2% ranking seventh. The final category was honesty increasing 1% on the categories that students felt were important.

The third instrument, a student interview (Appendix A), was collected by the researchers on February 25, 2002, six weeks after the implementation began which targeted 7th and 8th grade Language Arts students. The researchers collected the same data as the interview collected in January 2002. The data was compiled in Tables 9 and 10 and Figures 19 and 20, which display the pre and post results of the student interview.

Table 9. Student interview responses for Language Arts Class A pre-implementation and post-implementation

Interview Responses	% of Responses Pre-Implementation	% of Responses Post- Implementation
Definition of Character		
• How you are inside	75%	55%
• Personality	50%	10%
• Values and Traits	25%	35%
Traits that one has who demonstrate good character		
• Kindness	9%	2%
• Honesty	28%	30%
• Wisdom	9%	5%
• Nice/caring/thoughtfulness	11%	4%
• Respect/integrity	29%	34%
• Responsibility	14%	25%

Table 9 shows the comparison of the results of the student questionnaire for Language Arts Class A pre-implementation versus post-implementation. Of the 12 students interviewed in Language Arts Class A, 75% of the students said the definition

of character was how you are inside pre-implementation compared to 55% of the students post-implementation. Before the implementation, 50% of the students said the definition of character was personality whereas, 10% of the students after the implementation. Twenty-five percent of the students said the definition of character was your values and traits prior to the implementation compared to 35% of the students after the implementation. Students were asked what are traits that one has who demonstrate good character. Before implementation, 9% responded kindness, 28% responded honesty, 9% responded wisdom, 11% responded nice/caring/thoughtfulness, 29% responded respect/integrity, and 14% responded responsibility compared to 2% responded kindness, 30% responded honesty, 5% responded wisdom, 4% responded nice/caring/thoughtfulness, 34% responded respect/integrity, and 25% responded responsibility after the implementation.

In summary, the majority of the students who were interviewed said that how you are inside is the definition of character both before and after the implementation. The top two traits prior to and post-implementation that the interviewees' felt one has to have to demonstrate good character were honesty and respect/integrity. The one trait that was the least important to have to demonstrate good character for both pre- and post-implementation was kindness.

Table 10. Student interview responses for Language Arts Class B pre-implementation and post-implementation

Interview Responses	% of Reponses Pre-Implementation	% of Responses Post-Implementation
Definition of Character		
• Who a person is	75%	38%
• How you describe something	13%	25%
• Intelligence, problems, feelings	12%	37%
Traits that one has who demonstrate good character		
• Kindness	38%	50%
• Honesty	63%	75%
• Friendship	38%	38%
• Nice/caring/thoughtfulness	38%	25%
	50%	38%
• Respect/integrity	50%	25%
• Love/forgiveness		

Table 10 shows the comparison of the results of the student questionnaire for Language Arts Class B pre-implementation versus post-implementation. Of the eight

students interviewed in Language Arts Class B, 75% of the students pre-implementation said the definition of character was who a person is compared to 38% post implementation. Thirteen percent of the students prior to implementation said the definition of character was how you describe something compared to 25% of the students after the implementation. Before the implementation, 12% of the students said the definition of character was intelligence, problems, feelings, whereas 37% of the students after the implementation. Students were asked what are traits that one has who demonstrate good character. Before the implementation, 38% responded kindness, 63% responded honesty, 38% responded friendship, 38% responded nice/caring/thoughtfulness, 50% responded respect/integrity, and 50% responded love/forgiveness compared to 50% responded kindness, 75% responded honesty, 38% responded friendship, 25% responded nice/caring/thoughtfulness, 38% responded respect/integrity, and 25% responded love/forgiveness post implementation.

In conclusion, both pre- and post-implementation the majority of the students who were interviewed said that the definition of character is who a person is. The top trait, both before and after the implementation, that the interviewees felt one has to have to demonstrate good character was honesty. The two traits that were the least important to have to demonstrate good character were kindness and friendship prior to implementation compared to nice/caring/thoughtfulness and love/forgiveness after the implementation.

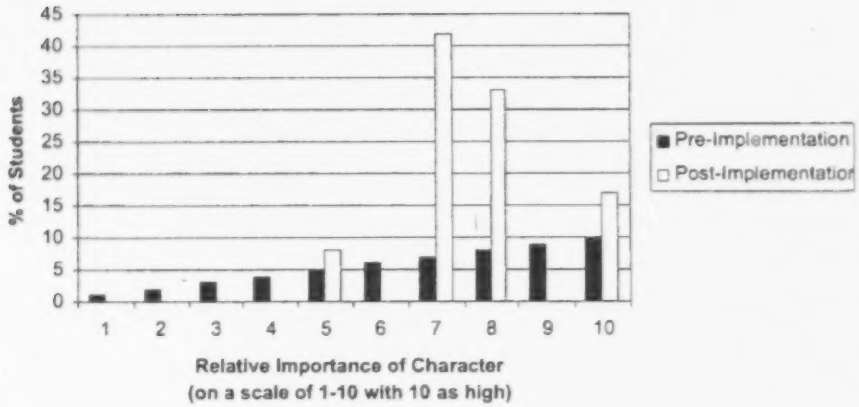

Figure 19. Pre and post student interview responses to importance of character (on a scale of 1-10) for Language Arts Class A

Figure 19 shows the results of the student interview responses on the importance of character for Language Arts Class A for both pre-implementation and post-implementation. Of the twelve students interviewed for Language Arts Class A, none of the students ranked the importance of character as an "one", "two", "three", or "four" (on a scale of 1-10) for both pre- and post-implementation. Before the implementation, 8% ranked the importance of character as a "five" whereas none of the students ranked "five" in the post-implementation. For both the pre- and post-implementation, none of the students ranked the importance of character as a "six". Forty-two percent of the students ranked the importance of character as a "seven" pre-implementation compared to 20% post-implementation. Prior to implementation, 33% of the students ranked the importance of character as an "eight" compared to 30% after implementation. None of the students ranked the importance of character as a "nine" for both pre- and post-implementation. Seventeen percent of the students ranked the importance of character

as a "ten" pre-implementation whereas 50% of the students ranked "ten" as important post-implementation.

In summary, ninety-two percent of the students ranked the importance of having character between a "seven" and a "ten" as high pre-implementation compared to 100% of the students ranked the importance of having character between a "seven" and a "ten". For both the pre- and post-implementation, students felt that having character was high giving ranking it between "seven" and "ten".

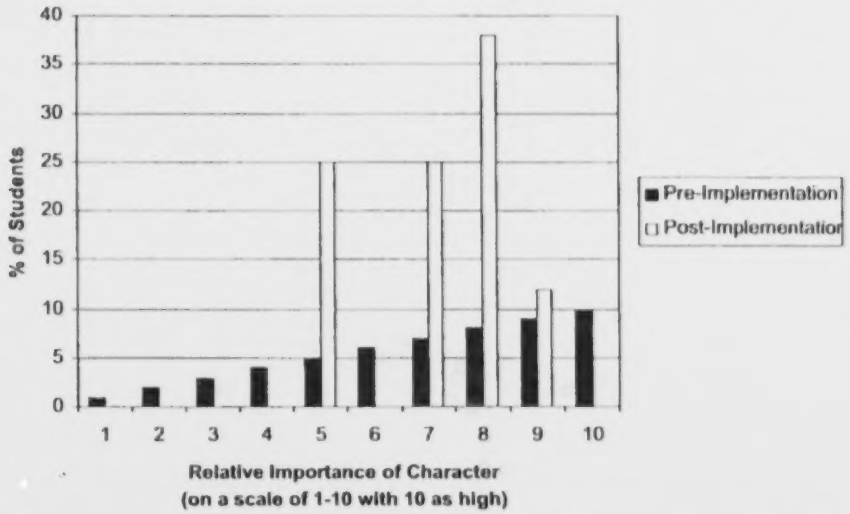

Figure 20. Pre and post student interview responses to importance of character (on a scale of 1-10) for Language Arts Class B

Figure 20 shows the results of the student interview responses on the importance of character for Language Arts Class A for both pre-implementation and post-implementation. Of the eight students interviewed for Language Arts Class B, none of the students ranked the importance of character as a "one", "two", or "three" (on a scale

of 1-10) for both pre- and post-implementation. None of the students ranked the importance of character as a "four" prior to implementation compared to 12% after implementation. Before the implementation, 25% ranked the importance of character as a "five" whereas 12% of the students ranked it "five" in the post-implementation. Pre-implementation, none of the students ranked the importance of character as a "six" compared to 13% of the students post-implementation. Twenty-five percent of the students ranked the importance of character as a "seven" pre-implementation compared to none of the students post-implementation. Prior to implementation, 38% of the students ranked the importance of character as an "eight" compared to 50% after implementation. Twelve percent of the students ranked the importance of character as a "nine" for the pre-implementation compared to 13% of the students post-implementation. None of the students ranked the importance of character as a "ten" pre-implementation as well as post-implementation.

In summary, fifty percent of the students ranked the importance of having character an "eight" or a "nine" as high pre-implementation compared to 63% of the students ranked the importance of having character an "eight" or a "nine". For both the pre- and post-implementation, students felt that having character was high giving ranking it either "eight" or "nine".

The final instrument, an observation checklist on cafeteria behavior (Appendix A), was collected by the researchers on February 26, 2002, six weeks after the implementation began which targeted 7th and 8th grade Language Arts students. The researchers collected the same data as the observation collected in January 2002. The

data was compiled in Tables 11 and 12, which display the pre and post results of the student interview.

Table 11. Categories and percent of incidents in cafeteria for Language Arts Class A pre and post-implementation

Behavior Category for Cafeteria	% of Incidents Pre-Implementation	% of Incidents Post-Implementation
In Line		
• Negative Behavior - respect toward others not shown	18%	11%
• Positive Behavior – reflects manners (please, thank you, excuse me, etc…)	7%	9%
Seated		
• Negative Behavior – respect toward others not shown (didn't keep hands to self)	29%	20%
• Negative Behavior – respect toward others not shown (used derogatory remarks to friends)	14%	5%
• Positive Behavior – social responsibility (took care of own garbage)	68%	82%

Table 11 shows the comparison of the results of the observation checklist for cafeteria behavior for Language Arts Class A pre-implementation versus post-implementation. The table shows the results of positive and negative cafeteria incidents.

Of the 115 students in Language Arts Class A observed in the cafeteria, prior to the implementation, 18% exhibited negative behavior - not showing respecting toward others in line compared to 11% after implementation. Seven percent of the incidents recorded were positive behavior - reflecting manners (please, thank you, excuse me, etc...) in line pre-implementation whereas 9% of the incidents were positive post-implementation. Of the incidents recorded while the students were seated, pre-implementation 29% reflected negative behavior – not showing respect toward others (did not keep hands to self) compared 20% after implementation, 14% reflect negative behavior – not showing respect toward others (used derogatory remarks to friends) before implementation compared to 5% after implementation, prior to implementation 68% reflected positive behavior – social responsibility (took care of own garbage) compared to 82% after implementation.

In summary, students' negative behavior for both in line and seated behavior decreased after implementation. Positive behavior increased after implementation for both in line and seated behavior for Language Arts Class A.

Table 12. Categories and percent of incidents in cafeteria for Language Arts Class B pre and post-implementation

Behavior Category for Cafeteria	% of Incidents Pre-Implementation	% of Incidents Post-Implementation
In Line		
• Negative Behavior - respect toward others not shown	18%	33%
• Positive Behavior – reflects manners (please, thank you, excuse me, etc...)	0%	67%
Seated		
• Negative Behavior – respect toward others not shown (didn't keep hands to self)	15%	14%
• Negative Behavior – respect toward others not shown (used derogatory remarks to friends)	40%	36%
• Positive Behavior – social responsibility (took care of own garbage)	73%	50%

Table 12 shows the comparison of the results of the observation checklist for cafeteria behavior for Language Arts Class B pre-implementation versus post-implementation. The table shows the results of positive and negative cafeteria incidents. Of the 90 students in Language Arts Class B observed in the cafeteria, prior to the implementation, 18% exhibited negative behavior - not showing respecting toward

positive behavior - reflecting manners (please, thank you, excuse me, etc...) in line pre-implementation whereas 67% of the incidents were positive post-implementation. Of the incidents recorded while the students were seated, pre-implementation 15% reflected negative behavior – not showing respect toward others (did not keep hands to self) compared 14% after implementation, 40% reflect negative behavior – not showing respect toward others (used derogatory remarks to friends) before implementation compared to 36% after implementation, prior to implementation 73% reflected positive behavior – social responsibility (took care of own garbage) compared to 50% after implementation.

In summary, students' positive behavior increased after implementation for seated behavior. Negative behavior increased for in line behavior after implementation and positive behavior decreased for seated behavior after implementation for Language Arts Class B.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In conclusion, the implementation of the literature-based program was mildly effective on the problem of a lack of moral character interfering with student academic achievement. Because of this intervention, there was a decrease in the disciplinary infractions, an increase in grade point average, and an improvement in attendance and cafeteria behavior.

The researchers have a few modifications to suggest in using this intervention. First, a six-week implementation is too short of a period of time to expect

significant results. Extending this type of program over a greater span of time is highly recommended.

Secondly, the researchers recommend the intervention be across the curriculum. Instead of just using the intervention in the language arts classes, moral character and ethics could be emphasized in the content area curriculums as well.

Lastly, the researchers highly recommend character education be a focus throughout the entire school year. Each month the school could emphasize a positive character trait within each subject's curriculum. The following character traits are suggestions for themes: responsibility (accountability or dependability), respect (admiration and self-esteem), civility (courtesy or politeness), and civic mindness (concern with community well-being). These traits could be demonstrated through learning activities tied into each curriculum of each subject.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Student Interview Questions on Character
Student Questionnaire on Character
Observation Checklist on Behavior, GPA, Attendance
Observation Checklist on Cafeteria Behavior

Student Interview Questions on Character

Interview Questions:

1. What is your definition of character?

2. How important do you feel character is to being successful?

3. Name some traits that are important for a person with good character.

Student Questionnaire on Character

Directions: Circle the appropriate comment on how you feel about the statement.

1. Agree Disagree "It's important for me to be a person with good character."
2. Agree Disagree "My school tries hard to help students develop good character."
3. Agree Disagree "A person has to lie and cheat sometimes in order to succeed."
4. Agree Disagree "My teachers consistently set a good example."
5. Agree Disagree "When it comes to doing what is right, I am better than most people I know."
6. Agree Disagree "My parents always want to do the right thing no matter what the cost."
7. Agree Disagree "I would be willing to cheat on a test if it would help me get into college."
8. Agree Disagree "I would be willing to lie if it would help me get a good job."
9. Agree Disagree "People who are willing to lie, cheat, or break the rule are more likely to succeed than people who are not."
10. Agree Disagree "My parents would rather I cheat than get bad grades."
11. Agree Disagree "It's important to me that people trust me."
12. Agree Disagree "I am satisfied with the character of my generation."
13. Agree Disagree "I am satisfied with my own character."
14. Agree Disagree "Being thought of as honorable is important."
15. Agree Disagree "Being well off financially is important."
16. Agree Disagree "My religion is important to me."
17. Agree Disagree "Being treated with respect is important."
18. Agree Disagree "I have lied to a parent."
19. Agree Disagree "I have lied to a teacher."
20. Agree Disagree "I have refused to cheat even though others were cheating."
21. Agree Disagree "I have cheated during a test in school."
22. Agree Disagree "I have stolen something from parents and relatives."
23. Agree Disagree "I have stolen something from a friend."
24. Agree Disagree "I have stolen something from a store."
25. Agree Disagree "I have answered all questions on this survey honestly."

Observation Checklist on Behavior, GPA, Attendance

STUDENT	DEMERITS	DETENTIONS	OFFICE REFERRALS	GPA	ATTENDANCE

Observation Checklist on Cafeteria Behavior

CAFETERIA BEHAVIOR	DATE/TIME	TALLY
LINE		
Respect towards others not shown (Cut in line)		
Reflects Manners (Please, thank you, excuse me, etc...)		
SEATED		
Respect towards others not shown (Didn't keep hands to self)		
Social Responsibility (Took care of own garbage)		
Respect toward others not shown (Used derogatory remarks to friends)		

Appendix B

Character Trait Mosaic
Self Cartoon Template
I Am...Poem Model
"The Mighty" T-Chart on Behaviors
Character Trait Mosaic Group Assignments

CHARACTER TRAIT MOSAIC

PROJECT IS DUE_____

FOLLOW THESE STEPS IN ORDER TO COMPLETE THIS PROJECT:

1. PICK A CHARACTER TRAIT.
2. CREATE A SYMBOL TO REPRESENT THAT TRAIT.
3. USING THAT CHARACTER TRAIT AS THE SUBJECT OF YOUR PROJECT, FIND THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR SUBJECT AND JOT IT DOWN ON PAPER.
    a. dictionary definition
    b. your definition
    c. use it in a descriptive sentence
    d. three synonyms
    e. three antonyms
    f. the word in three different languages
    g. quotation using the word
    h. simile (_____ is like a _____)
    i. another type of figurative language of your choice
4. ONCE YOU HAVE OBTAINED AND JOTTED DOWN ALL OF THIS INFORMATION, YOU ARE READY TO CREATE YOUR MOSAIC.

    a. Cut a piece of construction paper into the shape of the word's symbol and divide it into ten sections.
    b. In each section of the paper, creatively write the subject word, and the other nine pieces of information you have written about the word.

Self Cartoon Template

Now it's time to create your own cartoon! Focus on a character trait that you have found in the novel. You may want to use the characters in the novel in your cartoon. You should include think and dialogue bubbles and the cartoon should be in color.

I AM ... POEM MODEL

First Stanza
I am... (two special characteristics you have)
I wonder... (something you are actually curious about)
I hear... (real or imaginary sound)
I see... (real or imaginary sight)
I want... (an actual desire)
I am... (the first line of the poem repeated)

Second Stanza
I pretend... (something you actually pretend to do)
I feel... (a feeling about something real or imaginary)
I touch... (a real or imaginary touch)
I worry... (something that really bothers you)
I cry... (something that makes you sad)
I am... (the first line of the poem in stanza one repeated)

Third Stanza
I understand... (something you know to be true)
I say... (something you believe in)
I dream... (something you actually dream about)
I try... (something you make an effort to do)
I hope... (something you actually hope for)
I am... (the first line of the poem in stanza one repeated)

Directions:
Complete each line following the directions within the parentheses that are written for each. Try to make the lines of the poem very descriptive. The final draft is due _____. If you get done early or want to add to this poem, create an art project of a drawing or collage that accompanies the poem and incorporates the ideas suggested in the poem.

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"The Mighty"
T-Chart on Behaviors

Inappropriate Behaviors	Alternative Behaviors

CHARACTER TRAIT MOSAIC GROUP ASSIGNMENTS

Each student will draw a playing card when they enter the room. Each group (3 of the same suit) will become a group. Each core class will have different character traits so that all traits are covered for the novel study.

Core One:
Ace- courage
2- honesty
3- fairness
4- responsibility
5- caring
6- confidence

Core Two:
7- empathy
8- restraint
9- sharing
10- cooperation
Jack- forgiveness
Queen- friendship
King- truthfulness

Core Three:
Ace- compassion
2- humor
3- loyalty
4- sincerity
5- kindness
6- honor
7- assertiveness

Core Four:
8- giving
9- integrity
10- equality
Jack- justice
Queen- wisdom
King- tolerance

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